

THE
PRINCIPLES
OF THE
Christian Religion.

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Translated from the French
By the Rev. THOMAS LALLY.
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Christian Religion.

L O N D O N.
Printed for John Norton, at the Lamb over against
Katherine's Street in the Strand.

MDCCLXXIX

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Translated from the FRENCH
By the Rev^d THOMAS LALLY,
Late Fellow of *Peter-House*, CAMBRIDGE.

VOL. II.



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OF THE
SECOND VOLUME.

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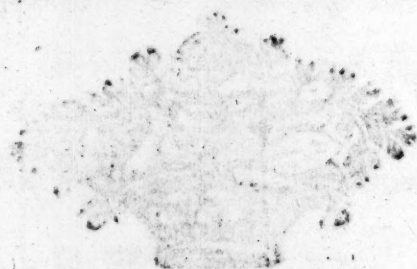
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A
T R E A T I S E

Of the PRINCIPLES of the

C H R I S T I A N R E L I G I O N .

P A R T III.

Proofs of the principles of the christian religion, drawn from the books of the old testament.

C H A P. I.

A recapitulation and abridgment of the principal truths established in the preceding Part. Abridgment of the essential points down to the promise of the Messiah. Abridgment of the proofs, that the promised Messiah is come. Abridgment of the proofs, that Jesus Christ is the promised Messiah. Proof drawn from the incredulity of the Jews. What has contributed most to blind the Jews, and conceal Jesus Christ from their knowledge, ought to have been the very means of his manifestation.

THE design of this third part is not the same with that of the foregoing. The truth of religion, and in particular the christian

PART III. stian, is already demonstrated. I seek no further, because I have found all I desire; and if I continue the examination, it is rather to have a more perfect knowledge of the treasures I already possess, and be more convinced of their value, than to acquire them.

A R T I C L E I.

*An abridgment of the most essential points,
down to the promise of the Messiah.*

WHEN first I applied myself to find out the proofs of a deity, they presented themselves to me of all kinds, and in abundance from all sides. It was impossible to be ignorant, that man must have certain duties in relation to God; and equally impossible to know them all by reason, and the meer light of nature. These duties I cou'd not learn with absolute certainty from other men; hence it appeared to me incontestable, that God himself must have revealed his will to mankind.

I was therefore under no necessity of examining any of those religions which are not founded on divine revelation: And it was not difficult for me to distinguish the true revelation; because it is but one, and entrusted to one people. I comprehended, that the scriptures must be absolutely as pure and divine, as the very revelation they contain, because they are its depositary and channel; wherefore

fore their preservation appeared as certain to **CHAP.**
me as their origin. **I.**

In reading them, I was struck with their antiquity; for they are the most ancient monuments in the universe. I was also surprized at the exact knowledge they gave me of other nations, which have no insight into their origin, but what they have received from thence; and at the light they afforded me in regard of certain traditions, common to all people, which have begun and ended at those periods of time marked in the scriptures.

The certainty of the miracles wrought by Moses, attests clearly his mission, and gives a divine authority to his writings. From the other miracles wrought in the times of Joshua, Elias, and Isaiah, equally certain with the former, they derive a new degree of light and strength. And I have observed, that as there is an essential connexion betwixt the books of scripture, which all refer to one another; so is there an essential dependence betwixt all the miraculous facts that authorize them, and prove their divinity.

But nothing made a greater impression on me than the prophecies. I perceived the event always verified their truth; that those which regarded a distant time, were justified by others which had their accomplishment during the lives of the prophets, and of such as survived them: and that we had very good reason to believe, that others, whose event was deferred, wou'd as certainly be fulfilled. I was

PART convinced by my own enquiries, in examining
 III. the prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel,
 and Daniel, which are the most extensive and
 celebrated: and had I no other proof of the
 divine inspiration of the holy scriptures, this
 alone would suffice me.

I have read them with care, and methinks,
 I may reduce them to three heads: to the
 decalogue, which contains the immutable
 principles of morality, and to all the parti-
 cular laws, which explain it, and demonstrate
 its use and extent; to the public worship, as
 prescribed by the law of Moses; and to the
 promise of the Messiah.

In the decalogue I admired with what clear-
 ness and precision the law of nature is abridg-
 ed, and renewed. So short and yet so full
 a law, visibly bears the stamp of the supreme
 legislator: and I discovered this truth by two
 marks; namely, the command of loving God
 with all our heart, and adoring him alone;
 and by the prohibition of consenting to any
 unjust desire: for in two words, he has esta-
 blished the foundation of all virtues, and cut
 away the root of every vice.

As for the external worship prescribed by
 Moses, which consists in ceremonies and sa-
 crifices, and several arbitrary observances, I
 was fully convinced, that it has no necessary
 connexion with religion, nor was it ever in-
 tended as a perpetual establishment; that it
 was not the chief design of God, even in
 regard of the Jews; but was to cease when
 true justice should be revealed; and there-
 fore

fore was not to subsist any longer than till the coming of the Messiah. CHAP. I.

ARTICLE II.

Abridgment of the proofs, that the Messiah is come.

THE Messiah is therefore the grand object of the scriptures. The most ancient prophecy is that which regards him. He was prophesied to the first man after his fall; and this promise was renewed to Abraham, fixed to the tribe of Judah, and afterwards to the house of David. The last prophet ends his writings by renewing it, and thus joins the beginning to the end.

The revelation of the promise of a Messiah, which includes also that of the condemnation of mankind, is manifestly divine: and these two mysteries, which human reason was incapable of discovering, but the knowledge of which was necessary to religion, inspire me with a new reverence for the scriptures.

The only doubt I cou'd have in regard of the prophecy concerning the Messiah, was to know if it was accomplish'd, or whether the accomplishment of it was still deferred. But the scriptures, which the Jews themselves have put into my hands, decide clearly in favour of the Christians.

PART They give me on this head, signs which

III. cannot be equivocal, and of which the senses
 are unfit to judge. According to the prophecy of Jacob, the scepter, or the chief authority, was not to depart from Judah, till he that was to be sent was come: and this tribe was to subsist, and be governed in the form of a common-wealth, by its magistrates until that time. It is no longer a political body: it has no magistrates of its own: it is dispersed and confounded with the others: its present condition therefore is an evident mark, that he who was to be sent is already come.

Daniel points out the precise time in which he was to come, and when the holy of holies was to put an end to sin, and give beginning to an everlasting justice. He fixes * the seventy weeks, on one side, at the edict of Artaxerxes for the re-building of Jerusalem, which was accomplish'd by Nehemias; and, on the other, at the death of the Messiah, and the establishment of his church. The two points of this duration are therefore known, and one determines the other; the term at which commences a revolution of 490 Years, shews me necessarily where it ends.

The prophets Haggai and Malachy, assure us, that the second temple shall subsist till the coming of the Messiah, that he will go thither in person, that he will preach peace therein, and that his presence will procure this temple a glory, which the other had not,

* These are weeks of years, as has been proved, which make four hundred and ninety years.

not, thro' it was far richer and more magnificent. This second temple has been destroyed above sixteen centuries ago; it is therefore equally evident, that more than sixteen centuries are past since the Messiah came.

Besides these proofs drawn from matters of fact, independent of discussion and reasoning, the scriptures furnish me with many others, as sensible and plain. The character it gives to the Messiah, as proper and peculiar to him, and by which he is to be known, is the conversion of the Gentiles. They are converted; he that was to convert them is therefore come.

A new covenant, whereof the Messiah is to be the mediator, will abolish the ancient. The ancient covenant I see abolished. I see that God has rendered its observance impossible, by driving the Jews from Judæa and Jerusalem, and reducing to ashes the only temple and altar on which he made the whole public worship depend. It is therefore as impossible for me to doubt, that the mediator of the new covenant is come, as to question those external facts, which prove, that the ancient covenant subsists no longer.

The only difficulty I could here meet with, is the prejudice,—that the promise of the Messiah having been made to the Jews, it concerns them more than any other nation, to know whether it be accomplished; and since this people still expect the Messiah, it is not sure whether he be yet come.

PART But this appearance of reason has upon

III. me a quite contrary effect: for this blindness of the Jews is clearly foretold by the prophets, who inform me both of the causes and consequences of this blindness, and give to the Messiah this double character, of being rejected by the greatest part of his nation, and of being adored by the Gentiles, to whom a select number of Jews, reserved by God's grace, are to preach him. Therefore it is because he has been rejected by the body of that nation, that I believe in him. I should not receive him, had he been received by that people.

As the blindness of the Jews is foretold, so is their punishment: and that punishment, of which I am a witness, is in my regard a new proof of their crime. I see this unhappy people banished from the inheritance of their fore-fathers, dispersed without prince, without priest, without temple, magistrates, or liberty, as the prophet Hosea foretold. I cannot therefore doubt, but they have been incredulous in regard to the Messiah, and so unhappy as not to know him, since their condition is entirely similar to that which, according to the prophets, was to be the punishment of their incredulity.

It is visible that the dispersion of the Jews has two principal motives: one to shew that the promise of a Messiah is accomplished; because the only nation to which it was made, a nation that was designed, as a religious state or society, to bear testimony of him, is no more

a state or religious body. The other, to dis-
perse thro' the whole world a proof that the
Messiah was promised, and is now come, by
carrying with them the prophecies which fore-
told him, and are now evidently fulfilled.
For such prophecies, in the hands of enemies
to christianity, cannot justly be suspected: and
the divine providence, which has spread over
the whole world witnesses who depose in fa-
vour of christians, contrary to their own will,
cannot be sufficiently adored.

The same providence is no less visible in the
preservation of the Jews, notwithstanding
their dispersion, and the universal contempt
into which they are fallen. No other people
cou'd possibly have subsisted so long, without
any of those means which serve to unite men
together: and even with all human means, no
other people would have been able to preserve
themselves, or avoid being confounded with
other nations. The Jewish people alone,
banished, dispersed, without protection, or
sensible connexion, without magistrates, or
temple, subsist to this day unmixed with
others. Here the hand of God is manifest;
and such a miraculous preservation has a visi-
ble relation to those prophecies which foretell,
that the Jews will at length acknowledge the
Messiah, whom their fore-fathers have reject-
ed. They are dispersed, because they have
not believed; and preserved, because they are
to believe. Thus these two prodigies join
with each other, to witness that the Messiah
is come.

ARTICLE III.

*Abridgment of the proofs, that Jesus
Christ is the promised Messiah.*

NOW since it is indubitable, that the Messiah is come, who can hesitate to acknowledge Jesus Christ to be this Messiah? All I have hitherto seen in scripture, demonstrates this verity; and the application we ought to make, of what has been said, to Christ, is not only easy, but necessary. The tribe of Judah, a little after his coming, lost that authority it had preserved to his time; it ceased to be governed by magistrates, and formed no longer a state or common-wealth.

Daniel's weeks finish at his coming; and the last, which is fruitful in mysteries, encloses in a narrow compass, his public ministry, his death, and the establishment of his church, as the prophet had foretold.

He came, according to the prophecy of Haggai and Malachy, into the second temple built by Zerobabel. He preached in it often, and announced peace. He foretold the ruin of it, to prove that the prophecy had received its accomplishment.

Who but he converted the Gentiles? and who but he sent his disciples over the whole world, to spread the knowledge of the true God, and overthrow idols?

The

The ancient covenant vanished, when he established the new; and no human power has hitherto been able to re-establish the temple and altar, whose sacrifices he abolished.

Some Israelites, enlightened by grace, have believed in him: all the others have been blinded, as the prophets had foretold.

Their blindness, and the faith of the Gentiles, are of the same date, and their dispersion followed soon after their blindness. It is therefore impossible to separate the person of Jesus Christ from the Messiah, since both are but one and the same indivisible object of the prophecies; and Jesus Christ has always accomplished what the prophets foretold would be accomplished by the Messiah.

ARTICLE IV.

A proof drawn from the incredulity of the Jews.

I Am not ignorant of what the unbelieving Jew opposes to such clear and convincing arguments. The Messiah ought to be a king, says he, to extend his empire by conquest, to subject all nations, to fill Jerusalem with riches and spoils, and to crown the jewish nation with power and glory. And you know, continues he, that Jesus Christ lived like a private person, that he and his disciples were poor, and that he made no attempt to rescue

PART us from the Roman yoke; so far was he from
 III. subjecting to us all nations.

My design is not to cure jewish blindness; this is a miracle reserved for another time. His blindness afflicts, but does not stagger me; it makes me search more diligently than he has done, into the true sense of scripture.

The sacred writings are mixed every where with clearness and obscurity, but especially when they foretell the reign of the Messiah; and this designed mixture is a consequence of God's resolution to discover, or conceal, the meaning of his promises, according to the dispositions of those who wou'd love the reality, or take up with the outward appearance.

It was necessary a king should be promised, whom the people might desire, and a deliverer, whom the just might acknowledge. It was necessary to interest the whole nation in the scriptures which promised the Messiah, to render these scriptures dear to them; and to inspire the people with a zeal and confidence necessary for their publication: but the knowledge of them was to be reserved for those who understood the divine secret, and desired a saviour, but not a conqueror. In effect, that which induced the people to expect him, is the very thing which has hindered their acknowledgement. But such a Messiah, as the people expected, would have been useless and dangerous, and I should have very little value for a conqueror, who had only flattered my vices.

The

The kingdom of the Messiah, according to **CHAP.**
the scriptures, is to be a kingdom of peace: I.
and consequently, without those battles and
victories, with which the Jews have filled
their heads. He is to announce peace to all
nations, instead of oppressing them. He will
leave the kings of the earth upon their thrones,
and content himself with making them
humble and faithful. He will have nothing
in common with bad princes. He will fill
Jerusalem with grace and justice, and not with
external riches acquired by injustice and vio-
lence. He will be without pride, pomp, or
splendor, without any resemblance of other
kings. No human means will he employ to
gain a kingdom. His reign will be everlast-
ing; and it will not be till he has sat down at
the right hand of his Father, that all his ene-
mies shall be made his footstool.

All these marks are quite opposite to the
idea the Jews have formed of the Messiah, but
all agree exactly with Jesus Christ, and none
but him. Thus, because the Messiah is to be
a king, I acknowledge Jesus Christ for the
Messiah; and it is precisely because he is not
such a king as the Jews expect, that I re-
vere him as the king foretold in scripture.

ARTICLE

ARTICLE V.

That which has contributed most to blind the Jews, and to conceal Jesus Christ from their knowledge, ought to have been the very means of his manifestation.

THERE remains another difficulty, apparently more insurmountable than the former; and this consists in the scandal of the cross. The Jews cannot resolve to acknowledge for their king, and the Messiah, a person whom they have crucified; and the belief of nations astonishes, but does not convert them.

But what most contributes to the blindness of the Jews, and to conceal Jesus Christ from their knowledge, is that very thing by which they ought to have known him. For the death and ignominy of the Messiah are clearly foretold by the prophets, and in particular by Isaiah. He was to be nailed to the cross, and die upon it, according to the prophecy of David; who foretold likewise, that the patience of the Messiah would be considered as weakness, and his trust in God as vain. The Messiah was to be put to death by his own people, according to Daniel; and the whole nation was to weep, according to Zachary, for him they had pierced. He was to be the destruction of death itself by dying. He was

to rise from the tomb without corruption. He was to deliver, by the effusion of his blood, the captives held in a subterraneous prison. He was to crush the serpent's head by the weakness and fragility of the flesh, figured by the bruised heel. He was to abolish all the ancient sacrifices, by offering up himself a pure holocaust.

He was to be elevated on high, like the brazen serpent, and be a restorer of health. He was to pray like Moses, and give victory, with extended arms. He was to make the tempest cease like Jonas, and be swallow'd up by death, rise again the third day, and preach repentance with incredible success to the Gentiles. He was to be hated by his brethren, like Joseph, sold and delivered up to the Gentiles, after descending into the tomb, and being from thence like him delivered. He was to nourish Egypt, and reign there, and to be the saviour of that country, and afterwards of his own family.

He was to be sacrificed by his own father, like Isaac; to rise again after his sacrifice, and become the father of a numerous posterity after his death. He was like Abel, to be slain by Cain, for his virtue, and in hatred of the testimony he had from God. He was to be delivered of his own spouse in his sleep, and by the opening of his side, like Adam. He was to be slain like the paschal lamb, on the same day, and at the same hour; and none but those houses, which were sprinkled with his

PART his blood, were to be spared by the destroying
 III. angel.

He was to enter as high priest into the sanctum sanctorum upon the solemn day of expiation; and he was to rend the veil, that hindered the reconciliation of mankind, and their entrance into heaven; by suffering his flesh to be torn by torments, and the violence of them to be such, as to separate his soul from the body.

He was to bear, like the scape-goat, our sins into the wilderness. He was to be loaded with our maledictions, and to offer himself to the justice of his father, to bear its full weight, and change it into mercy. He was to prepare, by his blood, a salutary bath for those who are infected with leprosy; and consent freely to his own death, that he might set us at liberty. He was to seal the new covenant with blood, a blood infinitely more precious than that with which the old covenant was sealed by Moses. He was to make a sprinkling over all the people; and thus make the testament, whereby we were to become his heirs, eternal and immutable. He was to substitute, in the place of those legal purifications, (incapable of themselves to purify those who put their trust in them) one only sacrifice, whose effect should be general and perpetual, and be always efficacious in proportion to the faith and hope of those, who from thence expect their justification.

In fine, he was to deliver from the fear of death, and a long captivity, those who waited

waited for the death of the high-priest, and placed their refuge and safety in this expectation, and who could not be re-established in their possessions, and country, but by this means.

This is what the scriptures are full of; this is what we meet with in almost every page; they preach nothing so much as the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The scriptures would be unintelligible, were the Messiah to resemble the idea the Jews have formed of him; and it would be an unaccountable thing, that they should agree perfectly with Jesus Christ, whom the Holy Ghost never had thought of; and be so contrary to the Messiah, whom that blessed Spirit designed to foretel.

But after so strong, and clear a light, that pours in upon us on all sides from the holy scriptures; let us turn our consideration to what we have felt, and reflect a while upon our own riches.

PART

III.

CHAP. II.

Important reflections upon the prophecies accomplished by Jesus Christ. If only one prophet had foretold all that Jesus Christ has done or suffered, the miracle would still be very great, and the proof divine. The miracle is far greater, because several prophets, separated by place, and time, have foretold what Jesus Christ has done, and suffered. By the accomplishment of the prophecies, all past, or future seducers, are convinced of imposture. This proof, founded on the accomplishment of prophecies, acquires daily new strength, and demonstrates more and more that Jesus Christ is the true Messiah.

ARTICLE I.

If only one prophet had foretold what Jesus Christ has done and suffered, the miracle would still be very great, and the proof divine.

IF only one prophet had promised mankind a Messiah on the part of God; if he had punctually marked out the determined time when he was to appear, what he was to teach, to suffer, what kind of death he was to die of, how he should triumph over death by his resurrection, by what blindness the people, by whom he was expected, would refuse to believe in him, tho' they were a witness of his

his miracles; with what readiness the Gentiles should receive him, tho' he was unknown to them: and if this prophet had added, that the people of Israel should immediately be punished for their incredulity, by losing Jerusalem, the temple, and Judæa, and, by a necessary consequence, their public worship; if he had distinctly foretold their dispersion; if he had assured us this dispersion should continue till they believed; and if he had promised with the same assurance, that in spite of their dispersion, they should always continue a distinct people, discernible from all others: a prophecy so astonishing, so circumstanced, so connected, would be the most wonderful thing in the world, and would have the most devotedly before its accomplishment, the attention of all mankind.

But if after several ages since the prophecy, Jesus Christ had come in the manner predicted; if he had faithfully accomplished the prediction in all points, and every thing had exactly corresponded with what the prophet foresaw in futurity; what prodigy could be comparable to such a conformity betwixt Jesus Christ and the prophecy? and who could refuse looking upon such a prophet as divinely inspired, and Jesus Christ as the Messiah.

ARTICLE

PART

III.

ARTICLE II.

The miracle is far greater, because several prophets, separated by time and place, have foretold what Jesus Christ has done and suffered.

BUT such a wonder and proof are infinitely inferior to the testimonies it has pleased God to give of the truth of the christian religion. It is not only one man who is commissioned by God to promise the Messiah. This promise began with the world, and was often received in after-ages. It was always the object and hope of saints, and became in time the hope of a whole people, chosen out from the rest to testify its certainty. The prophets during several ages have foretold, what the Messiah was to do, and suffer: some have mentioned particular circumstances, and others have added new ones to them. His mysteries have occupied them all, but under different symbols and images: and tho' their principal object has been the same, they have all copied it by certain views, which do not perfectly represent it, except they be all united.

Thus from the beginning of the world, the Messiah has been promised and foretold; and his coming is the proper expectation of the whole world. All the prophets that speak of him, are separated in time and place, and yet they all follow a divine light, which reveals to them

the

The only object with which God himself seems to have been occupied. Nothing therefore is more august or sublime, than such an object, which is the term and center of the whole revelation.

But, this is what renders the character of the Messiah inimitable, and impossible to be usurped by any other. For what possibility is there, that any other but he whom God was to send, should know all that was foretold of him? how could he unite them all in his person? how put them into execution? by what light cou'd he see into those obscurities, with which the prophecies are veiled? how could he ever reconcile the seeming contradictions? how could he ever have separated the reality of the mysteries from the veil that covers them? and tho' he had the power of imitating what is above the power of man, how could he ever have an adequate idea of what he was to attempt to imitate.

Here therefore the hand of God is manifest, and Jesus Christ is evidenced to be the Messiah. Since the beginning of the world, all the prophecies have been present to his mind; he separated them from what was foreign to them, and only served to cover them: he has united them all, tho' spread thro' several places. He has taken from them all that seemed contradictory, when not considered in respect to him: he has equally accomplished them in regard of what they contained, as well humbling as divine, and demonstrated himself the center and end of them

PART all, by reducing them to unity in his own
 III. person.

ARTICLE III.

By the accomplishment of the prophecies, all seducers, whether past or future, are convinced of imposture.

BY the completion of the prophecies, which is the particular and incommunicable character of Jesus Christ, all seducers, whether past or future, are convinced of imposture; and it is very important to make this evident, by a series of short and plain arguments.

There is but one deliverer promised; and to one only the scriptures bear testimony. Whosoever therefore has neither been promised nor foretold, can be nothing but an impostor: and whoever cannot ascend as high as the first promise, or grounds himself upon scriptures less ancient than those of the Jews, is convinced by that alone of imposture, either because he has no title, or only a false one.

All the prophets foretell what the Messiah is to do, and suffer; there can therefore be no doubt betwixt him, who has done, and suffered, what the prophets foretold, and him who has had no knowledge of their predictions, or has not fulfilled them.

Amongst the predictions of the prophets, there are some which cannot be repeated, and are so annexed to certain times and places, that they

they cannot be imitated by a false Messiah. It was necessary, for instance, that the true Messiah should come into the world before the destruction of the second temple, because he was to teach there. It was necessary he should lay the foundations of his church in Jerusalem, because from the mountain of Sion, it was to be spread over the whole world. It was necessary the Jews should reject him before their dispersion, because it was to be the punishment of their wilful blindness. Necessary it was also, that the conversion of the Gentiles should be his work, or that of his disciples, since it is by this visible mark that the prophets desire to know him.

Now the temple is no more: Jerusalem is possessed by strangers; the Jews are dispersed, and the Gentiles converted. The Messiah is therefore come, this is clear: but it is not less clear that no one else can repeat the proofs he has given of his coming, and by consequence no one else can fulfill what the prophets foretold would be fulfilled by the Messiah.

C 4 ARTICLE

ARTICLE IV.

The proof founded upon the accomplishment of the prophecies, gains new force every day, and demonstrates more and more, that Jesus Christ is the Messiah.

THIS kind of proof has an invincible force, whose impression every one is capable of feeling ; and by an admirable conduct of providence, this force, instead of weakening by length of time, continually encreases. For the condition of Judæa and Jerusalem, from whence the Jews are banished ; their dispersion, which still continues ; the conversion of the Gentiles, which is universal, and notorious ; the preservation of the Jews, which miracle becomes daily more astonishing, and contrary to the ordinary course of natural things, and to the example of other people ; that persevering expectation of a Messiah, which delay weakens not, and is evidently the end of providence in their preservation : all this continues in full force ; acquiring every instant new strength : and Jesus Christ is at this day as clearly proved by these testimonies, which both Jews and Gentiles render him by their present condition, and even more forcibly, than those first dispositions of providence, which degraded the Jews, and

put the Gentiles in their place : because it is more above human, and any but divine power, to keep things during sixteen ages in a violent state, than to reduce them to this state for a while, by a transitory effort.

CHAP. III.

Examination of those books which are peculiar to christians, and which they consider as divine. The authors of these books peculiar to christians, were all cotemporaries. No history was ever written by such a number of cotemporary authors : they were all ocular witnesses, and had a share themselves in many things. First proof of their having been cotemporaries, is their advancing nothing which can reasonably make us doubt of it. All historical facts, and circumstances, prove them to have been cotemporaries. Their books have been quoted by authors cotemporary with the apostles. The church has always carefully distinguished betwixt true and false scriptures. She never suffered the true ones to be adulterated. The church is older than the scriptures, and could receive no others, but such as were conformable to the doctrine of the apostles. The certainty of the scriptures founded on tradition ; in what sense it is true, that were it not for the authority of the church, we should not believe the gospel.

ARTICLE

PART
III.

ARTICLE I.

The authors of those books which are peculiar to christians, were all cotemporaries. No history has been written by such a great number of cotemporaries.

IN continuing my enquiries, I am far from forgetting what I have discovered ; but I design to conceal it, in some measure from myself for a time, in hopes of finding new proofs of those truths, of which I am already persuaded : for I cannot believe but the establishment of the christian religion, separate by itself, and independent of ancient prophecies, has something singular and divine : and that Jesus Christ has added to the proofs and testimonies the old testament gives of him ; and to those with which the present state of the Jews and Gentiles continues to furnish us, has added, I say, some evident signs, that he was the deliverer promised from the beginning of the world.

With this view I read those books which are peculiar to Christians, and which they consider as divine ; I am persuaded also of their divinity, and have made it my principal study. But to establish my faith, or strengthen that of my brethren, which perchance might waver, I am going to render an account to myself of the reflexions I have made for so long a time, by

con-

Considering them at present as if they were new, **CHAP.**
and had been intirely unknown to me, before **III.**
the examination I am going to make.

The books which Christianity puts into my
hands, are of two sorts. The first contain the
history of Jesus Christ, and the establishment
of his church; the others are written by apostles,
and addressed to particular churches, or to
christians in general. The authors of both are,
and have been always, well known, and are in
number * eight.

The first observation which I make in read-
ing them is, that they are cotemporaries, that
they all lived at the time those things which
are mentioned in their writings happened.
And I own I am extremely struck with such a
circumstance, a circumstance not only extraor-
inary, but singular in every respect; no histo-
ry, since the commencement of the world,
having been written by an equal number of
cotemporary authors. We look upon several
histories as very authentic, tho' there has not
been transmitted to our times, any monument
of writing as ancient as those facts of which we
are fully persuaded. The history of Alexander
king of Macedon, and conqueror of Asia, is
not attested by any cotemporary author. The
same may be said of the history of Augustus,
Tiberius, and many others, which we cannot
doubt of, tho' written by authors, who were
not witnesses of the facts therein contained.
And 'tis very rare, when the facts are ancient,

* The four evangelists, with St. Peter, St. Paul, St. James,
and St. Jude.

PART to have well circumstantiated proofs of the same
 III. date and age.

ARTICLE II.

They were all ocular Witnesses, and had a share in many things.

IN the second place, I observe, that not only the authors of these books were cotemporaries, and that the things mentioned in their writings happened in their time, but that they themselves were † ocular witnesses of all; that they had a share in many things; that they were not only instructed in relation to the facts, but of their causes and motives; that they had all the same knowledge, and in the same degree, and that they agree in the same essential points, by giving an uniform testimony.

In vain should I seek for any thing of a similar nature in the whole universe. Cotemporary authors themselves have seldom seen the facts they relate: they were not in the secret, nor of the council. They were often in a distant

* St. Luke and St. Mark, who by some are supposed to have been the disciples of St. Paul and St. Peter, were, more probably, immediate disciples of Jesus Christ. St. Luke, who alone makes mention of the seventy two disciples, was one of the number, according to some ancient writers, and one of those who were going to Emmaus. And there is no reason I should distinguish St. Mark the evangelist, from Mark called John, or even Joseph, the fourth son of Mary, mother of James, Simon, Jude, and Joseph. What St. Luke relates, in the commencement of his gospel, relates only to the facts of which he could not have been a witness, and which he must have learnt only from the blessed virgin, and some others of the same time.

ent country from that wherein the event hap-
 ned, whereof they were informed only by
 public reports, which are seldom faithful. And
 their want of exactness is almost always evi-
 dent to those who undertake to compare the
 relations of different tho' cotemporary writers.

If it happens that an author be at the same
 time both historian and witness, that he has ac-
 companied the prince or general † whose actions
 he relates, that he has been his particular con-
 sident, and had a share in his deliberations and
 councils; we set a high value upon his memoirs;
 and should look upon it as an injustice, and
 defect of discretion to call them in doubt, with-
 out solid proofs, tho' such a writer's testimony
 is single.

We value highly likewise histories written by
 princes, or generals*, who relate their own
 actions with an air of sincerity and modesty,
 which leaves an appearance of probability in
 their writings, tho' otherwise their testimony
 might naturally be suspected.

What must we then think of the joint wit-
 nesses of so many historians, who relate nothing
 but what they saw with their eyes, who
 were present at all the transactions, who
 heard each particular, and are themselves
 a great part of the history they write? Who
 can refuse to believe persons who write thus?
That which we have seen and heard, declare we

unto

† As Polybius with respect to Scipio.

* Xenophon's history of the retreat of the ten thousand
 Greeks. Caesar of the Gallic wars.

PART unto you: we preach unto you the word of life,
 III. which was from the beginning, which we have
 heard, which we have seen with our eyes, and our
 hands have handled it. And what rashness
 would it not be, to call in doubt what another
 of them says, to assure us of the truth of his
 testimony? For we have not followed cunningly
 devised fables, when we made known unto you the
 power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but
 were eye-witnesses of his majesty.*

There can be no historical certainty in this
 world, if a history written and attested by so
 many cotemporary writers, writers so well in-
 structed, and so exactly informed of every thing,
 be not absolutely certain. The christian reli-
 gion, to examine no further than the age and
 number of its historians, has an evident advan-
 tage over all that is believed by men on human
 authority: for the facts upon which it is found-
 ed, are not only incontestable, but no other
 history, to speak even of the most indubitable,
 has proofs of equal certainty.

1. 1. epist. St. John, i. 3.
 2. epist. St. Peter, v. 16.

ARTICLE

ARTICLE III.

First Proof that they are cotemporary writers, is, their advancing nothing that can make us doubt of it.

Nothing, methinks, can be opposed to such a clear evidence, but the suspicion that perhaps the authors, whom we look upon as cotemporary, and who give themselves out for such, are not so; that they lived in different times; and that they are the inventors, and not the ocular witnesses of what they relate.

Such a suspicion, were we to mind it, would attack equally the truth of all history. No author could be reputed cotemporary; none faithful; none would deserve to be believed; and the more proofs he produced, that every thing was transacted with his certain knowledge, and that he had a great share therein, the more his exactness in proving it, would render him suspected.

But I will suppose for once, that such a suspicion, unreasonable as it is, deserves a serious answer; I have several to make, not only of a serious nature, but such as will not admit of a reply.

In the first place, the authors I examine, write nothing but what is conformable to the time in which they write, to the places, persons, customs; finally, to the civil government, state of religion, and public affairs, of which

PART which they make mention. They represent
III. the situation of the Jews, and the power and
 { dominion of the Romans, such as they were in
 fact ; and always according to the degrees and
 changes that happened under the different
 princes who commanded in a part of Judea,
 and under the governors of Palestine and Syria
 for the Romans. Nothing drops from their
 pen that can be said to contradict the strictest
 probability, the truth of history, the computa-
 tion of time, or any of those things in that age
 which are known to us by other means : now
 it is visible, such an exactness has not been the
 effect of precaution, but the consequence of
 simple truth ; and it is because they always
 spoke it, that they have always seemed to speak
 it. For critics in history know how diffi-
 cult it is, nay impossible, to write a false histo-
 ry, and pretend to fix it to certain places and
 times, and to known persons, without falling
 into those inconveniencies which evidently dis-
 cover the falsity, and which no fiction can
 avoid.

ARTICLE IV.

*All historical facts and circumstances
 prove them to be cotemporaries.*

IN the second place, not only these authors
 have written nothing contrary to what co-
 temporary authors should write, but all circum-
 stances prove them invincibly to be such ; they
 lived

ed in the midst of Jerusalem ; they prayed CHAP.
openly in the temple, and taught there ; they III.
were cited before the priests, and the council of
the nation, for having cured a lame person,
who was asking alms at one of the gates of the
temple. St. Paul, a long time after, was cast
into prison there, at the time he was preparing
to offer one of the sacrifices prescribed by the
laws. The temple was therefore in being, and
Jerusalem in its splendor, when St. Luke wrote
the acts of the apostles, which was not till after
he had written his gospel, and consequently,
a considerable time before Titus, who destroy-
ed Jerusalem, and burnt the temple.

The imprisonment and delivery of St. Peter
suppose Herod living ; that this prince was at
variance with the Tyrians ; that he granted
them peace at the persuasion of one of his mini-
sters, and that he was struck invisibly by the
hand of God, while he was making a public
speech. All these events are interwoven, and,
as it is visible, without affectation or design.

St. Paul, while prisoner at Cæsarea, is que-
stioned by two Roman governors, who suc-
ceeded one another. He speaks before king
Agrippa and Fælix in his own defence ; and he
is sent to Rome to be judged by Nero, to whom
he had appealed : and the time when this hap-
pened, and in which it was written, is certain-
ly known.

The famine, which was to rage in the time
of Claudius, was foretold by a prophet. † The
Jews were driven from Rome, because of this
famine ; one of those exiled Jews retires to Co-

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rinth,

† Acts xviii. 2.

PART rinth, and is known there by St. Paul : another

III. time the same Jew returns with his family to
 ~~~~~ Rome, and St. \* Paul desires to be remembered  
 to him, and thanks to be given him in his  
 name. Nothing can be more simple, or less  
 liable to suspicion, than facts of this nature ;  
 but they prove most convincingly, that St. Paul  
 lived under the empire of Claudius ; and we  
 know that St. Luke, his historian, followed  
 him in his peregrinations, and even to Rome.

We might make other observations of a like  
 kind, if it were necessary ; but whoever pleases  
 to give himself the trouble, may add new ones,  
 and convince himself by proofs of all kinds,  
 that the authors of these christian books were  
 certainly cotemporary to the facts they men-  
 tion.

## ARTICLE V.

*Their books have been quoted by authors  
 cotemporary with the apostles.*

**I**N the third place, these books have been  
 famous from the beginning, and cited  
 by great men who were cotemporary with the  
 apostles, such as St. Ignatius, St. Clement, St.  
 Polycarp ; or cotemporary with their disciples,  
 such as St. Justin, and St. Irenæus. These  
 men have all spilt their blood to attest the  
 truths and facts which these books contain.  
 But this is not what I am now considering ; I  
 attend to nothing but to the testimony which  
 these

\* Rom. xvi. 3.

These men give to the antiquity of the books CHAP.  
we here examine. They must have read them, III.  
because they quote them; they believed the  
apostles and evangelists authors of them, since  
they ascribe them to those sacred writers. Of  
this they were sure, because they lived not on-  
ly in their time, but with them. It is there-  
fore just we should be satisfied they are their  
works: and we cannot refuse their testimony,  
except we have a mind to violate all the rules  
of natural equity and reason.

But if any one should require something far-  
ther, to convince him that these books are as  
ancient as they are said to be, and that the  
works which have been attributed to those au-  
thors, are not supposititious; other witnesses,  
very ancient and worthy of credit, cite the for-  
mer, and justify, by their quotations, the truth  
of those works that have been transmitted down  
to us. St. Clement is cited by St. Irenæus; St.  
Ignatius is quoted by the most ancient church  
historian, and other great men; and St. Poly-  
carp has the same vouchers. Thus, by a chain  
of witnesses that strengthen one another's cre-  
dit, we ascend to the times of the apostles, and  
their writings: and whatever is certain since  
their time, bears witness to their certainty.

ARTICLE VI.

*The Church has always carefully distinguished betwixt true and spurious scriptures.*

IN the fourth place, if any thing is capable of adding to, and even of completing this certainty, 'tis that scrupulous distinction the ancient christians always made between genuine † and supposititious scriptures; and the only solid and decisive principle on which they grounded this distinction. For on one side many heresies have endeavoured to avail themselves of scriptures attributed to the apostles, whose venerable names appeared at the head of those fictitious gospels, of which they were falsely supposed to be the authors. But, on the other side, the christians who remained constant in the profession of the ancient traditions, opposed nothing to these innovations, but their evident novelty. “ They have been, “ said they †, unknown to us till this very time. “ They

† Apocryphorum librorum, & adulterinarum scripturarum, quas ipsi continerunt, infinitam multitudinem afferunt, ut stultos ac velanos homines, qui veritatem scripturarum ignorant, in stuporem trahant. Irenæ. l. 1. c. 17. Nov. Ed. c. 20. which he refutes afterwards by the tradition of the churches, and particularly that of Rome, l. 3. c. 3.

† Ego meum [evangelium] dico verum, Marcion suum. Ego Marcionis affirmo adulteratum, Marcion meum: quis inter nos determinabit, nisi temporis ratio ei præscribens auctoritatem, quod antiquius reperietur, & ei præjudicans vitiationem, quod posterius revincetur? Tertull. l. 4. cont. Marc. c. 4.



They were so to the apostles, whose names they bear ; none of these ever gave them to any

CHAP. III.

In summa, si constat id verius quod prius, id prius quod & ab initio, id ab initio quod & ab apostolis : pariter utique constabit id esse ab apostolis traditum, quod apud ecclesias apostolorum fuit sacrosanctum. Videamus quod lac à Paulo Corinthii hauserint : ad quam regulam Galatæ sint recorrecti : quid legant Philippienses, Thessalonicenses, Ephesii : quid etiam Romani de proximo sonent, quibus evangelium & Petrus & Paulus sanguine quoque suo signatum reliquerunt. Habemus & Joannis alumnas Ecclesias, nam etsi apocalypsim ejus Marcion respuit, ordo tamen episcoporum ad originem recens, in Joannem statuit autorem. Sic & cæterarum generositas recognoscitur. Dico etiam apud illas, nec solas jam apostolicas, sed apud universas illis de societate sacramenti confœderantur, id evangelium à initio editionis suæ stare quod eum maximè tuemur : *Marcionem verò plerisque nec notum : nullis autem notum, & non eò damnatum.* That is to say, for that very reason because it was particular to Marcion. Idem, l. dict. c. 5.

His ferè compendiis utimur, cum de evangelii fide adversus hæreticos experimur, defendentibus & temporum ordinem posteritati præscribentem, & auctoritatem ecclesiarum traditioni apostolorum patrocinantem. Quia veritas falsum præcedat necesse est. Idem, ibid.

Adeo antiquius Marcione est [evangelium] quod est secundum Mattheum, ut & ipse illi Marcion aliquando crediderit. Idem, l. dict. c. 4.

Distincta est à posteriorum libris excellentia canonica auctoritas veteris & novi testamenti, quæ apostolorum confirmata testimoniis per successiones episcoporum, & propagationes ecclesiarum, tanquam in sedè quadam sublimiter constituta est cui ferat omnis fidelis & pius intellectus. S. Aug. cont. Faust. l. 11. c. 5.

Huic [Manichæo] vos de Christo quare credidistis ? (*he called himself the apostle of Jesus Christ*) quemnam testem vobis sui apostolatus adduxit ? An apostolos nostros pro se testes vocabit ? Non opinor ; homines producet, sed libros aperiet---quod si eos falsatos dixerit, ipse testium suorum fidem oppugnabit : si autem alios, quos dicat apostolorum nostrorum, codices protulerit, quomodo eis ipse auctoritatem dabit, quam per ecclesias Christi ab apostolis constitutas non accepit, ut inde ad posteros firmata commendatione transcurreret. Idem l. 13. contr. Faust. c. 4.

Cum cæpero Matthæi evangelium recitare, ubi narratio nati-

PART “ any of the churches they founded : no church  
 III. “ ever received them from their hands. There  
 “ is

esse Matthæi, quam Matthæi esse dicet universa ecclesia ab apostolicis sedibus usque ad presentes episcopos certa successione perducta. Tu mihi quid contra lecturus es? Aliquem forte librum Manichæi, ubi Jesus negatur esse natus ex virgine. Sicut ergo ego credo illum librum esse Manichæi, quoniam ex ipso tempore quo Manichæus vivebat in carne, per discipulos ejus certa successione præpositorum vestrorum ad nostra usque tempora custoditus atque perductus est : sic & istum librum credite esse Matthæi, quem ex illo tempore quo Matthæus ipse in carne vixit, non interrupta serie temporum ecclesia certa connexionis successione usque ad tempora ista perduxit. Idem l. 28. contra Faust. c. 2.

Et dic mihi cujus libro potius credere debemus, ejusne apostoli, qui Christo, cum adhuc in terra esset, adhæserat, an nescio cujus Persæ, qui tanto post natus est? Sed alium forte proferes librum, qui nomen habeat alicujus apostoli, quem à Christo constat electum : & ibi Christum natum ex Mariâ non esse lecturus es. Cum ergo necesse sit alterum horum librorum esse mendacem, cui nos potius censeres fidem accommodare debere? eine, quem illa ecclesia ab ipso Christo inchoata, & per apostolos provecta, certâ successionum serie, usque ad hæc tempora, toto terrarum orbe dilatata ; ab initio traditum & conservatum agnoscit : an ei, quem eadem ecclesia incognitum reprobatur. Idem, ibid.

Quod autem putat quærendum esse Faustus quid de se Jesus prædicaverit, cui non justum videatur? sed numquid hoc scire potest nisi discipulis ejus narrantibus? Quibus si non creditur annunciantibus quod de virgine natus sit, quomodo eis fides adhibebitur annunciantibus quid de se ipse prædicaverit? Si enim prolatae fuerint aliquæ literæ, quæ nullo alio narrante ipsius propriæ Christi esse dicantur, unde fieri poterat ut, si verè ipsius essent, non legerentur, non acciperentur, non præcipuo culmine autoritatis eminerent in ejus ecclesiâ, quæ ab ipso per apostolos succedentibus fibimet episcopis usque ad hæc tempora propagata dilatatur? Quis est ergo tam demens, qui hodie credat esse epistolam Christi quam protulerit Manichæus, & non credat facta vel dicta esse Christi, quæ scripsit Matthæus? Idem, l. 28. contra Faustum, c. 4.

Aut si etiam de Matthæo utrum ipse ista scripserit dubitat, de ipso quoque Matthæo non potius id credat quod invenit in ecclesiâ quæ ab ipsius Matthæi temporibus usque ad hoc tempus certa successionum serie declaratur, ut credat nescio cui ex transversò de Perside post ducentos vel amplius annos venienti, & suadenti, ut illi potius quod Christus dixerit, feceritque credatur? Ibid.

De apocryphis iste ponit testimonia quæ sub nominibus apostolorum Andreæ, Joannisque conscripta sunt : quæ, si illorum essent,

is not the least trace amongst us of their assumed CHAP.  
antiquity ; no one ever quoted them ; no one III.  
ever undertook to explain them in our assem-  
blies; they are all posterior in time to the esta-  
blishment of truth, and all of the same date  
with the errors they favour; none of them had  
a being till after the death of the apostles, and  
we have no occasion to examine false monu-  
ments, whose forgery is as clear as their no-  
velty."

It is thus all fictions have been rejected.  
This invincible strength of an argument drawn  
from prescription, has demolished all those  
writings that are of a later date than the times  
of the apostles, and the first origin of the  
church. None were ever received without  
knowing upon what grounds they were to be re-  
ceived: and the only rule on this important  
point, was the certainty that they came from  
the apostles.

This proof becomes a double demonstra-  
tion, that the scriptures are truly written by  
the apostles, and that the apostles really lived  
at those times, when the things they mention  
happened. For the heresies of Cerinthus,  
Marcion, Valentinus, and some others, who

D 4 dared

scilicet, recepta essent ab ecclesiâ, quæ ab illorum temporibus per  
episcoporum successiones certissimas, usque ad nostra deinceps tem-  
pora perseverat. S. Aug. l. 1. contra adversarium legis & pro-  
phetarum, c. 20.

Legunt scripturas apocryphas Manichæi, à nescio quibus futo-  
ris fabularum sub apostolorum nomine scriptas, quæ suorum  
scriptorum temporibus in auctoritatem sanctæ ecclesiæ recipi me-  
rentur, si sancti & docti homines qui tunc in hac vita erant, &  
examinare talia poterant, eos vera locutos esse cognoscerent. Lib.  
2. cont. Faust. c. 39.



PART dared to alter the purity of the scriptures, either by adulterating them in some places, as I shall hereafter shew, or by substituting new ones in their room, are very ancient, and bordering on the times of the apostles themselves. Wherefore, since in so remote a period of antiquity, they were yet looked upon as novel, and later than all the true writings of the apostles, or the establishment of the church; it is absolutely evident, that the scriptures are as old as the apostles, and that the apostles were cotemporary with Jesus Christ.

## ARTICLE VII.

*The Church never suffered the true scriptures to be adulterated.*

IN the fifth place, the precaution which the ancient christians took to receive nothing as scripture, but from the hands of the apostles, and the first founders of the church, \* made them extremely attentive to the least alterations, which heretics endeavoured to introduce. They rejected them all, and proved their spuriousness, by comparing ancient copies, common to all churches, with those that were adulterated and more recent, and which none but the very sects that had falsified them,

\* Cum ex scripturis [hæretici] arguuntur, in accusationem convertuntur ipsarum scripturarum quasi non recte habeant, neque sint ex autoritate. Irenæ. l. 3. c. 2.

them, considered as genuine †. The Valen-CHAP.  
tians, the Marcionites, the Gnostics, the III.  
Manicheans, used this base artifice to destroy  
the

Quotidie reformant illud [suum evangelium Marcionitæ]  
preut à nobis quotidie revincuntur. Tertul. l. 4. con. Mar-  
cion. c. 5. p. 501.

Evangelium interpolando [Marcion] suum fecit. Tertull. l. 4.  
con. Marcion. c. 1. p. 501.

Humanæ temeritatis, non divinæ autoritatis, negotium est hæ-  
resis, quæ sic semper emendat evangelia, dum vitiat—itaque dum  
emendat, utrumque confirmat : & nostrum antequam, id emendans  
quod invenit, & id posterius, quod de nostri emendatione con-  
sistens, suum & novum fecit. Idem, l. 4. c. 4. p. 505.

Hoc, quod adversus impietatem vestram ex apostoli Pauli epi-  
stola profertur, omnes codices & novi, & veteres habent, omnes  
ecclesiæ legunt, omnes linguæ consentiunt. S. Aug. l. 11. cont.  
Faust. c. 2.

Unum eorum [of two passages which Faustus judged contra-  
dictory] non esse Pauli, nullo modo possumus dicere, quia in eo  
nulla variat codicum autoritas. Idem, ibid. c. 4.

Nihil mihi videtur ab eis impudentius dici, vel ut mitius lo-  
quar, incuriosius & imbecillius, quam scripturas divinas esse cor-  
ruptas : cum id nullis in tam recenti memoria extantibus exem-  
plaribus possint convincere. Aug. l. de utilitate credendi. c. 3.

Aperite dicite non vos credere Christi Evangelio : nam qui in  
Evangelio quod vultis creditis, quod vultis non creditis, vobis  
minus quam Evangelio creditis. Cont. Faust. l. 17. c. 3.

In præcipitium vos cæci mittitis, dicentes falsa esse in Evangelio,  
ubi vestra hæresis exitum non invenerit. Ut nobis nihil re-  
spondeat quo redire possitis unde Christo credatis, ubi vobis hæc  
pestilentia non possit opponi. Cont. Faust. l. 16. c. 33.

Quæ jam autoritas litterarum aperiri, quis sacer liber evolvi,  
quod documentum cujuslibet scripturæ ad convincendos errores  
vostros exire potest, si hæc vox admittitur, si alicujus ponderis  
estimatur? Aliud est ipsos libros non accipere, & nullo eorum  
vinculo detineri, quod Pagani de omnibus libris nostris, quod Ju-  
dei de novo testamento faciunt, quod denique nos ipsi de vestris  
& aliorum hæreticorum si quos suos & proprios habent—aliud est  
ergo autoritate aliquorum vel librorum vel hominum non teneri,  
& aliud est dicere : iste quidem vir sanctus omnia vera scripsit,  
ista epistola ipsius est : sed in ea ipsa hoc ejus est, hoc non est  
eius. Ubi eum ex adverso audieris : proba; non confugas ad  
exemplaria veriora vel plurium codicum, vel antiquiorum, vel  
linguæ

**PART** the proofs of those truths they designed to oppose, by suppressing certain passages of holy scripture, or adding something to them, the better to establish their errors. But the christians always exposed this double imposture only by shewing copies of a more ancient date

linguæ precedentis unde hoc in aliam linguam interpretatur est: sed dicas: inde probo hoc illius esse, illud non esse, quod hoc pro me sonat, illud contra me. Tu es ergo regula veritatis. Quidquid contra te fuerit, non est verum? Quid si alius simili insaniâ, sed tamen quâ tua duritia confringatur, existat & dicat: imo id quod pro te sonat, falsum est; hoc autem falsum est hoc autem quod contra te est, verum est; quid acturus, nisi forte alium librum prolaturus, ubi quidquid legeris secundum tuam sententiam possit intelligi? Hoc si feceris, non de aliqua ejus particula, sed de toto audies contradicentem & clamantem falsus est. Quid ages? quo te convertes? quam libri à te prolati originem, quam vetustatem, quam seriem successionis testem citabis? nam si hoc facere conaberis, & nihil valebis. Et vide in hac re quid ecclesiæ catholicæ valeat autoritas, quæ ab ipsius fundatissimis sedibus apostolorum usque ad hodiernum diem succedentium sibi met episcoporum serie & tot populorum consensione firmatur. l. 11. cont. Faust. c. 2.

Volo mihi ostendas unde autorem veritatis didiceris Christum, si eis, qui de illo scripserunt, quorum autoritas recenti memorie commendata atque firmata in posteros emanavit, audes adscribere falsitatem? non enim vidisti Christum; aut quemadmodum cum apostolis, locutus est tecum, aut de cælo te, sicut Saulum vocavit. Cont. Faust. l. 16. c. 11.

Eadem autoritas ecclesiarum apostolicarum cæteris quoque patrociniabitur evangeliiis [*the Marcionites acknowledged none but that of St. Luke, and even that with their alterations*] quæ proinde per illas & secundum illas habemus, Joannis dico, & Matthæi, [licet & Marcus quod edidit Petri affirmetur, cujus interpretres Marcus]—itaque & de his Marcion flagitandus, quid, omissis eis, Lucæ potius insisterit: quasi non & hæc apud ecclesias à primordio fuerint, quemadmodum & Lucæ?—Igitur dum constat hæc quoque apud ecclesias fuisse, cur non hæc quoque Marcion attigit, aut emendanda si adulterata, aut agnoscenda si integra? Tertull. l. 4. cont. Marc. c. 5. p. 505.

Aut proba esse quod credis; aut si non probas, quomodo credis? aut qualis es, adversus eum credens, à quo solo probatur esse quod credis. Tertull. l. 5. cont. Marc. c. 1. p. 576.



the forgery ; and then continued resolute, CHAP.  
admitting nothing that was new, and of re- III.  
ceiving nothing that was ancient ; because  
they did not think they had any authority to  
alter either, and looked upon the holy scriptures  
as a sacred and inviolable depositum ; and  
having received this depositum by a tradition  
as high as the apostles, they were obliged to  
preserve this tradition uninterrupted, and to  
trace thereby the source of divine revelation.

## ARTICLE VIII.

*The church is more ancient than the  
scriptures, and could not receive any  
but such as were conformable to the  
doctrine of the apostles.*

IN the sixth place, the christian religion did  
not begin with the scriptures ; and it does  
not seem possible in the nature of things, that  
any religion, true or false, should owe its be-  
ginning to a book of which the public had no  
previous knowledge. Jesus Christ was born,  
and died, before the gospel was written ; he  
had disciples, and instructed them, before those  
disciples taught others ; and the essential points  
of their doctrine which they preached, were  
determined and received as certain, before they  
were committed to writing.

By a necessary consequence, it was proper  
there should be an absolute conformity be-  
twixt those truths delivered by word of mouth,

PART and written verities \*, since they were the same

III. in the main, and the difference could be only  
 in the manner, that is, between speaking, and  
 writing. Otherwise people must have read  
 in the scriptures new and unheard of things,  
 they must have read the contrary to what they  
 had heard from the apostles; and if the apo-  
 stles had inserted in their writings what they  
 dared not teach by word of mouth, the  
 public would not have failed to have opposed  
 their discourses to their writings, and conse-  
 quently to suspect both, and be diffident of  
 such teachers.

By another as necessary consequence, all  
 the facts attested by the writings of the apo-  
 stles, must have been already known to all  
 christians, and look'd upon as certain; since  
 their writings were not received but inas-  
 much as they were agreeable to the doctrine  
 established by predication.

By a final consequence, ‡ it was impossible  
 that any writing contrary to the doctrines of  
 the apostles, and disowned by them, should  
 acquire in their time a public authority amongst  
 christians; and it is upon this the maxim  
 of St. Augustin (a maxim however not par-  
 ticular to that father) is founded, that were it  
 not for the authority of the church, he would  
 not believe in the gospel.

A R.

\* Ipse apostolus Paulus, post ascensionem domini de cælo vo-  
 catus, si non inveniret in carne apostolos, quibus communicando,  
 & cum quibus conferendo ? evangelium ejusdem societatis esse ap-  
 pareret, ecclesia ille omnino non crederet. S. August. lib. 28.  
 contra Faustum, c. 4.

‡ Ego evangelio non crederem, nisi me ecclesie catholice com-  
 moveret autoritas, S. Aug. l. 1. cont. Epam. Marich. quam  
 vocant fundamenti, c. 5.

ARTICLE IX.

*The certainty of scripture is founded on tradition. In what sense it is true, that were it not for the authority of the church, we should not believe the gospel.*

**T**HIS maxim, tho' very sure in its true sense, is yet false, if ill-applied : it does not signify, that the only testimony of the truth of scripture, comes from the christian church as infallible, and inspired by the Holy Ghost. This would be falling into a sophism, which is called a vicious circle : for we should prove the scriptures by the church; and endeavour, by the same kind of proof, to establish the church by the scriptures.

That we may not confound things very different in their nature, we must consider the scriptures in two views, and the church likewise in two relations †. The scriptures may be considered as an ordinary book, composed at a certain time, attributed to particular authors, and written with fidelity. The church may

† Sicut ego credo illum librum esse Manichæi, quoniam ex illo tempore quo Manichæus vivebat in carne per discipulos ejus certa successione præpositorum vestrorum ad vestra usque tempora custoditus atque perductus est : sic & istum librum credite esse Matthæi, quem ex illo tempore quo Matthæus ipse in carne vivit, non interruptâ serie temporum ecclesia certa connexionis successione usque ad tempora ista perduxit. S. Aug. l. 28, cont. Faust.



PART may be considered, as a human society, which  
 III. began at a certain time, had particular men  
 for its masters, and was well informed of what  
 passed at its first establishment.

The church thus considered, has no supernatural privilege; but it has all the authority of a people whose testimony is appealed to, a people well instructed in what regards itself, and zealous of those titles on which its foundation is established. In this sense it witnesseth, that the scriptures it uses, are as ancient as itself; that they are the genuine production of those authors whose names they bear; that those authors have seen the things of which they wrote, and that their history is faithful.

There is nothing, in the common order of nature, superior to such a testimony, given by a whole people, who know their original, and how they were formed first into a body, who have carefully preserved their first titles; who never suffered them to be altered; and who desired from their first publication, that every private man should read them, should hear them explained, and preserve faithful copies of them.

But in this testimony I see nothing yet of a divine nature: as I do not yet suppose any thing divine in the scriptures, to which this testimony relates. On both sides every thing is as yet natural, every thing equal; and then it is that the maxim laid down by the ancients, and  
 St.

St. Augustin, is true and exact: † that it would CHAP.  
not be reasonable to believe the gospel, did III.  
not the church attest its verity. For how  
should we know that in effect the book of the  
gospels is as ancient as it is said to be, or that  
it was composed by the authors, whose names  
it bears, if the church did not constitute a  
body at that very time, and by an uninter-  
rupted tradition had not constantly respected  
the gospel as a book, with whose antiquity  
and authors she was well acquainted.

I may afterwards examine the gospel, and those  
writings, of which the church, considered as a  
human society, attests the truth, and vouches  
for the authority. And it is easy for me in  
this examination, to discover the scriptures to  
be divine; that they clearly promise infalli-  
bility to the church, and subject all human  
understanding to her authority.

Then it is that I begin to look upon the  
church in another view, as invested with a di-  
vine authority; and I add to the first testi-  
mony rendered by the church to the scriptures,  
as by a society of the same antiquity, and founded  
upon

† Si quærat à nobis, nos unde sciamus apostolorum esse istas  
litteras, breviter vobis respondemus, inde nos scire, unde & vos  
scitis illas litteras esse Manichæi, quas miserabiliter huic autori-  
tati præponitis. Si enim & hinc vobis aliquis moveat quæstionem,  
dicens libros, quos profertis Manichæi, non esse Manichæi, quid  
facturi estis? nonne potius ejus deliramenta ridebitis, qui contra  
rem tanta connexionis & successionis serie confirmatam impuden-  
tiam hujus vocis emittat? sicut ergo certum est illos libros esse  
Manichæi, & omnino ridendus est qui ex transverso veniens tanto  
post natus, litem vobis hujus contradictionis intenderet: ita cer-  
tum est Manichæum vel Manichæos esse ridendos, qui tam fun-  
datae autoritati à temporibus apostolorum ad hæc tempora succef-  
sionibus custoditæ atque perductæ audeant tale aliquid dicere. S.  
Aug. l. 32. cont. Faust. c. 21.

PART upon them, but which was only a natural  
 III. one; I add, I say, another testimony, of another order, and supernatural, which the same church gives to the scriptures, as being the infallible depositary of divine revelation.

But it does not follow by a necessary consequence, that because I look upon the scriptures as divine, I ought to look upon the society that preserves them, as invested with an infallible authority. I have experienced the contrary, in regard of the Jewish synagogue, whose scriptures are certainly divine, and yet these scriptures are so far from giving to the synagogue the title of infallibility, that they warn me to distrust her interpretation; and it is because I believe the scriptures, that I do not believe the synagogue.

'Tis not therefore upon the mutual testimony of a supernatural and divine order, that the scriptures, and the society which preserves them, give one another, that the first proof of the certainty of scriptures is founded. This essential proof consists in a public and perpetual tradition, attested by the whole body, visible in each age, necessarily and evidently connected with the first origin of this society, and of those scriptures, to which it bears testimony. Such a tradition is of an infinite force, to establish their antiquity, and historical verity, on which their divine authority necessarily depends; and it is inconceivable, that men, who were not in other respects without understanding, could ever renounce this tradition, to leave the scriptures without any other



other proof of their divinity, but the senti-CHAP.  
ment of every one's private conscience, or a IV.  
kind of prophetic discernment.

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C H A P. IV.

*Proofs that the christian scriptures have nothing but what is true in them ; and that their authors were sincere. General proofs of the sincerity of the evangelists and apostles. Particular proofs. Acknowledgment of their illiterateness, and meanness of their first employments. Acknowledgment of their faults and weaknesses. They all agree in what is essential ; but this conformity was not concerted. The truth of the main point proved by some contradictions.*

ARTICLE I.

*General proofs of the sincerity of the evangelists and apostles.*

N O longer am I permitted to doubt, but that the authors of those books which the Christians look upon as divine, lived at the very time that those things they mention were transacted, that they themselves were spectators, and eye-witnesses, and had no small share in them. The proofs I have of this are unanswerable ; and the testimony of all Christians spread over the whole world, supported by the constant tradition of all ages, and attest-

PART III. ed in its origin by authors as ancient as the apostles, adds to these proofs a degree of certainty, sufficient to convince any reasonable mind; especially, when one considers with what severity all that was not of the earliest antiquity has been rejected by christians; with what fidelity the depositum of the evangelists and apostles has been preserved; and with what facility they could compare the written doctrine with that which had been preached to them, and which being more ancient, served them as a rule to judge of the other.

Here I might stop and finish my enquiries: for if the christian books were written by sincere and well informed men: if they were always held in veneration by such as received them from their hands: if \* they looked upon them as divine, and did not even refuse to lay down their lives, not only for their verity, but likewise, that they might not be delivered up to those who had a mind to suppress them: if this be so, I say, the whole christian religion is proved, and the certainty of each mystery is contained in the certainty of the general revelation.

But there are so many other things which convince me of the sincerity of the authors, as well as of the verity of the writings I am examining, and which are capable of making a like impression upon others, that it is my duty to stir up their attention.

\* Qui sunt libri quos legis adorantes. Act. Mart. Scillitanorum.

ARTICLE

ARTICLE II.

*Particular proofs. Acknowledgment of  
their illiterateness, and the meanness  
of their first employments.*

THE first thing which particularly strikes me, is the sincere acknowledgment which the apostles make, that their first employment was that of simple fishermen; that † they only knew the lake upon which they had their bark and nets; that they were without letters, education, or any preparation for the office they were employed in; and by consequence, that they had not had any commerce with learned and ingenious men, either in regard of political affairs, or religion. That one of them had even exercised an employment odious to the Jewish nation, having been a publican, and entered without any preparatory interval upon the apostleship. And what astonishes me more is, that it is this publican become apostle, who is willing that all who read his gospel should know what he was.

Is it in the common order of nature to do so? Was it not, on the contrary, seemingly advantageous to religion, that those who were intrusted with teaching the whole world, should cover their first ignorance, and dissemble the

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mean-

† “ And perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men. Act. iv. 13.



PART meanness of their birth and employment?

III. Was the acknowledging so openly their primitive ignorance and rusticity, a probable method of gaining the attention of the doctors of the law, or the priests, full of contempt for those who were without erudition? Could they ever hope to subject the heathen sages and philosophers, by declaring themselves fishermen and publicans? And if in the first beginning, when all was yet doubtful, a remainder of sincerity inclined the apostles not to deny their first original, why did they afterwards affect to inform all ages, after they had seen the success of their preaching, after they had raised the admiration of Jews and Gentiles, and had converted to the gospel † both priests and philosophers? Such sincerity, in such circumstances, must come from a supernatural principle. And I am much more inclined to believe men, whom success blinds not, who remember their ignorance and meanness, when they are become the light of others, and who use precautions that their first condition be never forgotten.

† “And a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.” Act. vi. 7.

## ARTICLE

ARTICLE III.

*Acknowledgment of their faults and weaknesses.*

**B**UT it is still more above human reason and worldly wisdom, to render our own faults public, and to eternize the memory of our weaknesses, than not to dissemble the meanness of our conditions and employments. There is nothing more opposite to the spirit of the gospel, than pride and ambition; and yet the apostles, those preachers of humility, speak very often of the love they had for distinctions and preference †, notwithstanding the lessons and examples of their master. They mention those who asked the two first places, and they acknowledge that the others conceived a jealousy of it; nay, they give us to understand, that even to the last moments of the life of Jesus Christ, ambition caused amongst them disputes and contestations.

They confess their want of faith on several occasions, and particularly in one wherein their incredulity was an obstacle to their freeing a possessed person ‡. They acknowledge, that the greatest, and almost palpable, miracles, such as the two famous multiplications of loaves in

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the

† “ And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest.” Luke xxii. 24.

‡ “ The disciples said, why could not we cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief.” Matt. xvii. 19, 20.

PART the desert, made little impression on them †, and  
 III. that Jesus Christ reproached them with having  
 eyes and ears, and not the use of them, and  
 that they neither had reflexion nor understanding. They own they had no knowledge of true justice, and that they made it depend upon an external purity of hands and body; that they comprehended nothing in the predictions of Jesus Christ, which he made concerning his humiliations, his death and resurrection, because they comprehended nothing about his kingdom, or the means of its establishment: and after three years of instruction, they were without any light in all ‡ those essential points,

They relate with ingenuoufness, that they had all of them been presumptuous, by promising Jesus Christ to follow him to death, and yet they were all cowardly enough to abandon him. They mention, in an astonishing manner, the three several denials of St. Peter, without omitting any thing that might render his presumption and perjury inexcusable. They say of him, that on an important occasion, he was called Satan by Jesus Christ ||, and treated as a scandalous and carnal man, who comprehended nothing in the ways of God. And in relating the words of the same apostle,

† "Perceive ye not yet, neither understand? Have ye your heart yet hardened? Having eyes see ye not? and having ears hear ye not? and do ye not remember?" Mark viii. 17, 18.

‡ "And they understood none of these things, and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken," Luke xviii. 34.

|| "Get thee behind me, Satan, thou art an offence unto me, for thou favourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." Matt. xvi. 23.



apostle, which put a kind of equality betwixt CHAP.  
Jesus Christ, Moses, and Elias, they add, IV.  
that he knew not what he said. }

Can one be diffident of the sincerity of those who give such convincing proofs of it? is there any example amongst mankind of a like nature? and what historian has ever mixt the history of his own ignorance, weakness, or meanness, with those facts he transmitted to posterity?

Such an ingenuous proceeding would astonish me less, if the recital of the actions of Jesus Christ was necessarily related with the faults of his disciples: but they are all, except the treason of Judas, quite detach'd from them: and we should not have a less knowledge of the miracles, the contradictions, and reproaches from the Jews, and the ignominious death of Christ, had all which regards the weaknesses of his disciples, been omitted. There is therefore certainly something supernatural in a sincerity so contrary to the views of human wisdom, to the sentiments of a worldly heart, or even to the desire of edifying others, to the fear of being upbraided with past faults, or to the lawful care of preserving to the ministers of the gospel, that authority necessary for the right discharging of their ministry.

The apostles must therefore have depended upon more than natural means, to have thus neglected all natural ones, and to have chosen such as were contrary. They must have had no expectations either from their reputation or personal merit; they must have been sure of

PART success by other ways, and have believed, that  
 III, the less they appeared proper at first for their  
 office, the more visible would be the power of  
 him that commissioned them. We shall see  
 in the sequel, that this has been their constant  
 persuasion, and that such a persuasion must  
 have been from heaven.

#### ARTICLE IV.

*They all agree in what is essential; but  
 this conformity was not concerted.  
 The truth of the main point proved  
 by some seeming contradictions.*

**B**UT before I engage in a deeper consideration of the inimitable and divine character of the evangelists, I shall stop a few moments to compare what they have written, and I find by comparing their books, new proofs of a sincerity, not only humanly perfect, but truly divine.

They all agree in what is essential; and this conformity amongst several cotemporary authors, is of an inestimable merit, to those who have a love of truth, especially in things of such importance; but this conformity was not agreed on, and of this we have convincing proofs.

The style is different, tho' the general and common character of the evangelists be that of an admirable simplicity, infinitely removed from all flattery and affectation. This difference of  
 style

style is sensible betwixt St. Matthew and St. John, and betwixt both these writers and St. Luke; and this verifies what is otherwise proved by tradition, that these authors are different.

2. They did not all write at the same time. St. Luke speaks of those who had written before him, and we learn from monuments of antiquity, that St. Matthew wrote the first, and St. John the last of all.

3. As the times were different, so were the places in which they wrote. And this proves there was no agreement amongst them.

4. If there had, the evangelists would have formed a compact body of history; they would have placed every event in its natural order, and done what interpreters have endeavoured to do since, by uniting what is particular to each evangelist, to form of separate parts a complete history. Whereas it is visible, on the contrary, that every evangelist has chosen for himself a particular order, without attention to a general disposition, and if his narration agrees with that of others, it is truth and not design that causes the agreement.

5. We are still more satisfied when we observe some seeming contradictions in the evangelists; for it is evident, they would have avoided them if they had written in concert, or else would have explained them, so as to prevent that unfavourable opinion which some might conceive of authors that seem to contradict each other.

Why,



PART III. Why, for example, does St. Luke, who wrote after St. Matthew, make use of a genealogy so different from that given by the former, of the family of Jesus Christ, which he had drawn from the public archives? or why does he not explain in what manner they may be reconciled? was it, that he desired to be believed preferably to St. Matthew? or cou'd he hope to be believed himself, taking no notice of a genealogy so different from his, nor offering to shew its falsity? but on the contrary, he seems only to oppose it by another, of whose grounds he leaves us quite ignorant.

Some perhaps might think they had a right to suspend their judgment betwixt these two evangelists; and refuse to credit either, seeing them so at variance; but it is certainly contrary to all human reason, to suspect them of having acted by agreement, upon seeing the little precaution they have taken to remove a kind of scandal which this seeming contradiction might possibly occasion.

If St. Luke was ignorant of what St. Matthew had written, the affectation of being conformable to him, could never enter into his mind. And if he knew it, without giving himself any trouble about the bad effect which the difference of genealogies would infallibly produce in the minds of a great many, it is still more evident he cou'd not write in concert.

The strength of this argument becomes more cogent, when we reflect upon this unconcern

concern of St. Luke, after having written his CHAP.  
gospel, upon his silence, upon his constancy IV.  
in not saying a word, which might serve as an  
elucidation. For tho' christians might remain  
satisfied, yet it was impossible for strangers not  
to object to this diversity. It must be then,  
that St. Luke, notwithstanding these circum-  
stances, refused designedly to add any thing :  
and now so severe and constant a refusal, cou'd  
never be the effect of a mutual agreement.

We may observe some other seeming con-  
tradictions in things indeed of less importance,  
but which still more fully prove, that the  
evangelists were very far from writing through  
any other motive but truth.

St. Matthew and St. Mark say, that Jesus  
Christ cured a blind man in coming from  
Jericho; † and St. Luke says positively, that it  
was going thither, adding several other acti-  
ons which Jesus Christ did in that city, and  
in particular the honour he did Zacheus to  
chuse his house for his lodging.

The miracle of the centurion's servant, who  
was cured by Jesus Christ, is celebrated in the  
gospel : \* but one of the principal circumstan-  
ces is very differently related by St. Matthew,  
who says, the centurion came himself to ask  
that favour of Christ, from what it is by St.  
Luke,

† " And as they departed from Jericho. Matt. xxi. 29.

" And as he went out of Jericho. Mark x. 46.

" As he was come nigh unto Jericho—and Jesus entered, and  
passed through Jericho. Luke xviii. 35, &c. xix. 1.

\* " And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came  
unto him a centurion, beseeching him, and saying. Matt. viii. 5.

PART Luke, who assures us, that this officer judged  
 III. himself unworthy † to appear before him, and  
 deputed some of his friends.

When Jesus Christ sent his disciples into Judea, to preach that the kingdom of God was near at hand; he forbade them to prepare any thing for their journey, not so much as a staff, ‡ according to St. Luke and St. Matthew. But St. Mark excepts in this general prohibition the staff, so necessary to foot-travellers.

I know these difficulties may be removed, \* but not without thinking: and many are not capable of finding out by themselves what reconciles them. Men who form the design of writing on the same subject, suffer not such differences to escape them, which must be perceived by every one; or should they have escaped their attention, they take great care afterwards to reform them: but the evangelists saw and left them. They acted therefore out of another principle than human wisdom: they thought of nothing but being sincere, without affecting to be so: they therefore were moved by a Spirit superior to all difficulties, since he dispensed with their obviating any of these objections.

We

† "Neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee. Luke vii. 7.

‡ "Take nothing for your journey, neither staves. Luke ix.

3. "Nor yet staves. Matth. x. 10.

"And commanded them that they should take nothing for their journey, save a staff only. Mark vi. 8.

\* They are answered in the following chapters.



We find many of this kind of difficulties in CHAP. IV  
the history of the resurrection of Jesus Christ; but the chief is the narration of the angel's appearance, who spoke to the holy women: St. Matthew has described it thus: \* “ And behold, there was a great earthquake: for the  
“ angel of the Lord descended from heaven,  
“ and came and rolled back the stone from  
“ the door, and sat upon it. His countenance  
“ was like lightning, and his raiment white as  
“ snow. So that the keepers who were near  
“ the sepulchre, were so seized on with fear,  
“ that they became as dead men. But the  
“ angel addressing himself to the women, said  
“ to them: Fear not ye, for I know that ye  
“ seek Jesus, who was crucified: he is not  
“ here: he is risen.” One wou’d think by  
this narration, that the same angel who fright-  
ed the guards, heartened the women, and  
that all this passed in the same moment.

But St. Luke relates this in a manner, that  
appears different. “ The women, says he, †  
“ saw that the stone which had been before  
“ the sepulchre, was taken away. They  
“ went in, and found not the body of the  
“ Lord Jesus; which having caused in them  
“ surprize and trouble, two men appeared be-  
“ fore them in shining raiment. And seeing  
“ them seized with fear, said to them, Why  
“ seek ye amongst the dead him who is liv-  
“ ing? he is not here: he is risen.”

To

\* Matt. xxviii. 2. and the following.

† Luke xxiv. 2. and the following.

PART To judge hastily of this apparition by such  
 III. differences, one wou'd not take it for the same.

And St. John † adds a new difficulty, by separating St. Mary Magdalene from the other women, and granting to her alone the vision of the angels, tho' St. Matthew, Mark, and Luke assure positively, that they were all together, when the angel informed them of the resurrection of Christ.

I repeat not here, what I have often observed, that these seeming contradictions are but apparent, and that by meditation we may find a means to reconcile them. I only insist here on that seeming contrariety, of which every one feels the impressiion; and I maintain, that authors who had concerted things, and had no hopes of persuading but by an uniformity of testimony, wou'd have avoided with care a kind of contradiction, which is most visible perhaps to the vulgar, and more obvious than the answers of interpreters.

In reality, there have been men in all ages who have been offended at these appearances of inconsistency, and have looked on them as so many weaker parts, whereby they might attack the truth of scripture; but they ought to have produced a quite contrary effect. For nothing can be a stronger or more convincing proof of their verity, than this pretended weakness, which is an invincible proof they were not concerted; but that their authors were more intent upon truth, than a studied probability.

The

† John xx. 11. 12.

The great danger consisted not in some **CHAP. I**  
differences: it would have been greater from **IV.**  
an entire visible conformity. The differences  
are rare, and affect not the essentials: but  
the suspicion which a too regular uniformity  
might cause, would have weakened the whole,  
and shaken the foundations; and it is in this  
the wise conduct of providence is visible.  
Providence knew our nature, jealousy, and  
doubts: it has distinguished betwixt dangers;  
and to secure our faith in essentials, it has  
left wherewithal to exercise it in other points,  
having chosen a clear and visible conformity,  
where it was necessary, and veiling it design-  
edly, where the veil itself would serve to  
prove it, by shewing it was not affected.



*The supernatural and divine character of the evangelists, common to them all, and which agrees with them alone, and admirably proves their sincerity. They content themselves with a simple narration, and suppress all reflections, even when they appear unavoidable and necessary. A proof that such moderation is not the effect of artifice, nor of common sincerity, but of a supernatural conduct. New proofs : their simplicity and apparent indifference, in speaking of Jesus Christ and his mysteries, tho' they were full of zeal and love for him, and had an high idea of his actions, doctrine, and mysteries. It is a double prodigy, that this is the character of all the evangelists.*

FROM the consideration of their writings, I shall pass to that of the authors themselves, in order to examine their spirit and character ; and I find hereby new proofs of their strict sincerity.

For they all resemble one another in those points wherein they resemble no other men. They write of the most astonishing things, without appearing astonished : they declare the greatest wonders, as if they were common and ordinary : they speak of what concerns them the nearest, with a calmness and sedateness which resemble indifferency : and they all deny themselves, with the same severity, all manner  
of

of reflections, even where they seem absolute-  
ly necessary and indispensable.

CHAP.

V.

Such a character is not only new, but single. And it doubles the prodigy, that we find it in all the evangelists in the same degree, tho' we see no traces of it in other men.

But let us proceed to particulars: not with an intent to observe all; but to judge by some observations, what a variety of matter we should find, were we to enlarge upon the subject.

## ARTICLE I.

*They content themselves with a simple narration, and suppress all reflections, even where they appear necessary and unavoidable.*

**I**F the evangelists, in taking notice of the meanness of their birth and employment, had mentioned a word about the design of God, which was to evidence his power by using none but weak instruments; on a sudden they would have fixed the mind on the true point of light, and made their readers perceive, that their very ignorance and meanness were necessary in the designs of heaven. They owed, as one would think, this reflection both to the power and wisdom of God, as well as to themselves. Why then did they not make it? It must have been present to their mind; why then did they suppress it?

PART

III.

Their faults, which they speak of so often, and with such sincerity, would have appeared more excusable, had they said, at least but once, that they served to shew in them the strength of grace, which changed them on a sudden into quite other men: and yet they deny themselves this reflection; and who but they would have used such reserve and moderation?

They relate, how the chief priests and pharisees asked Pilate to place a guard at the sepulchre of Jesus Christ, during three days, for fear his disciples should steal his body, and publish afterwards that he was risen; and that the governor answered, Ye have guards, let them guard the sepulchre as ye think proper. This was the place to say: That Providence took them in their own snare; that their very precautions against the religion of Jesus Christ became its proofs; and that by thus placing guards, which depended on themselves and not on the governor, they took away the very shadow of all distrust and diffidence: but the evangelists are content with the bare history, and take no advantage of inferences. Such moderation, in such circumstances, cannot be natural.

The guards, who had been as it were thunder-struck by the glory of the angel \* who appeared to them, and flung back the stone with which the sepulchre was closed, after having been witnesses of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, published at the desire of the priests

\* Matt. xxviii. 11.



priests who paid them for their falsehood, how CHAP.  
his disciples during their sleep had stolen him V.  
away. It is not possible to relate this gross  
imposture, without reflecting at the same time  
on its confutation, viz. the prevarication and  
rashness of those men, who affirmed them-  
selves witnesses of what had been done in their  
sleep. But what is not in the power of un-  
inspired nature, has been in the power of the  
evangelist. † He has related that lie, and  
what is still more, the success of it; and then  
he has held his peace. Is the mind of man  
capable of such reserve? is there any one so  
ignorant of the heart of man, as not to per-  
ceive this surpasses its capacity, and bears the  
stamp of supernatural power?

St. Peter and St. John ‡ being informed by  
St. Mary Magdalene, that the sepulchre of Jesus  
Christ was open, and his body not to be found,  
determined to go thither; in running, St.  
John, as the youngest, came first; but by a na-  
tural horror he had not the resolution to enter.  
St. Peter, less timid, entered; and he saw  
with astonishment, that the linen in which  
the body of Jesus had been wrapt, was left  
behind, and that the handkerchief with which  
his head had been bound, was laid apart from  
the other linen. St. John, who had first  
confusedly seen these things by stooping down,  
and looking into the sepulchre, entered after

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St.

† “And this saying is commonly reported among the Jews  
“until this day.” Matt. xxviii. 15.

‡ John chap. xx. ver. 2. and following.

PART St. Peter, examined all, and never thought of  
 III. attributing this effect to his resurrection.

~~~~~ All these circumstances clearly prove, that the apostles were incapable of a design of stealing the body of Jesus Christ, much less of executing this design; since the two disciples, who appeared to have had the most courage and zeal, looked upon it as a bold action to go to the sepulchre, when it was open and the guards were gone: since for fear of being observed, they went running, and separate from each other; since one of them even refused to go in, not thro' fear of man, but from a less serious apprehension; but being animated by the example of St. Peter, he saw together with him the linen cloth on one side, and the handkerchief on the other; and since it is manifest, that had they had the design of taking away the body of Jesus Christ, they would not have lost time in unfolding the wrappings and laying them decently aside. Their precipitation and fear of a surprize, must have prevented any thing of this kind.

Why therefore does not St. John, one of Christ's disciples, when he relates these circumstances, make some such reflection? Why does he stop short there, where the mind of man, left to itself, could not have stopped. He knew those reports which the Jews affected to spread abroad. What he relates is sufficient to prove the falsity, and without doubt he was sensible of it: why does he not then make the application? Sincerity here is the least point of consideration; what proves it,

is still more surprizing: and I cannot refuse CHAP. V.
my assent to those men, who leave me at liberty to make those reflections myself, where they are so strong and decisive, and content themselves with the simple narration.

ARTICLE II.

Proofs that such a moderation is not the effect of artifice, nor of an ordinary sincerity, but of a supernatural conduct.

IT would be carrying diffidence to a great extremity, to suspect that the evangelists suppressed all transactions they had an interest in, to the end that this moderation might be accounted in them a higher merit, and that they might persuade others with more efficacy, by thus artfully hiding their desire of persuading. A finesse of this kind would strip sincerity of all its advantages, and of those marks whereby we are to distinguish it from falsehood; nay, it would become suspected by those proofs which should establish it; and by a malignity without principle or rule, mankind might doubt of every thing, even of what is most evident and certain.

But tho' we should suppose affectation and art in this simplicity of the evangelists; in regard of things in which they had an interest; there are several other instances, wherein none can attribute to this principle the severity with which they waved all reflections.

PART

V.

They had all a high esteem of Jesus Christ, of his innocence and holiness. Yet they all say, that he was baptized by St. John, which was only a baptism of humiliation and penance, and in appearance was only fit for sinners, and but a preparation for the gospel. There was a kind of necessity to reconcile with the eminent virtue of Jesus Christ, the profession of public penance. One word might have explained to us this mystery, wherein the glory of Jesus Christ is so far interested; but this single word escapes not from any of the evangelists, and they all leave us in an astonishment, tho' they were sensible that this would be the consequence.

Almost all the circumstances of the temptation of Jesus Christ in the desert, have something that offends and shocks us at first. One sees not without pain, and a kind of horror, the Saviour of the world in the power of Satan †, who transports him to the top of the temple, and after, of a high mountain, from whence he shews him all the empires of the world, which he dares to call himself master of, without this falshood being contradicted. One would expect some explication, which might render this part of the gospel less astonishing to human reason, which seems so derogatory to the honour and majesty of Christ; but this is refused; and yet the evangelists who refuse it are not less certain, that the circumstances they mention will become the

† Matt. ch. iv.

the object of the faith of a multitude of per-
sons; the reason is, that they knew they were
true, and relied on the power of God to make
them be believed.

The same may be said of the fear and mortal sadness of Jesus Christ *, of his bloody sweat, of his agony, of the need he had of being comforted by an angel, as likewise of his prayer, which he repeated so often, to be dispensed with from drinking his chalice, for which he seemed to thirst † so short a time before. It is certain that the evangelists, who looked on Jesus Christ as the source and fountain-head of all courage in the martyrs, would never have imagined any such thing, much less would they have wrote it, if they had not been obliged by truth; but this is not our object at present. My astonishment is, that they have said nothing to explain such things as appeared incompatible with the strength, intrepidity, and entire resignation of Jesus Christ, from the first instant of his incarnation. For their own interest is not in question, but that of their master. Can it be supposed that there is any artifice here in their suppressing all reflections? Do they expect that people will be better disposed to look upon Jesus Christ as God, after having seen him less resolute in appearance than the martyrs? It is evident, it could be nothing but the Holy Ghost, who both conducted the
F 4 thoughts

* Luke ch. xxii.

† Luke ibid. ver. 15.

PART thoughts and pen of the evangelists, and for-
 III. bad them to add any thing further; whilst the
 { human mind, without this assistance, must
 have condemned itself for such an omission.
 And it is evident the evangelists must have
 been persuaded that they were only his organs,
 and that neither their reflections, nor any other
 methods of human wisdom, were necessary to
 cause those truths to be received, which he
 could make us assent to whenever he pleased.

This becomes still more clear and manifest,
 on those occasions, wherein the very words
 of Jesus Christ seem to diminish the idea
 the evangelists would fain give him, and
 might have been softened by some proper cor-
 rective. As for instance,

It is related in St. Mark and St. Luke †, that
 “ a man falling on his knees before our Saviour,
 “ said to him, Good master, what should I do
 “ to acquire life eternal? And Jesus Christ said
 “ to him, Why callest thou me good? there is
 “ none good but God alone.” This answer,
 which the Arians have very much abused,
 seems to put a great difference betwixt Jesus
 Christ and God. One should think it would
 have been proper to prevent this abuse, by de-
 termining the true sense of Christ’s words; and
 none can deny but this must have been known
 to the evangelists; out of what motive there-
 fore did they suppress it? what zealous disciple
 would have failed on this occasion, for the sake
 of his master’s glory, to clear up so dangerous
 an

† Mark x. 17. Luke xviii. 18.

an obscurity? But it was less necessary to clear CHAP. this up, than to prove the sincerity of the evan- V. gelists, and the supernatural manner in which they were inspired. They would never have related the answer of Jesus Christ, if they had not been sincere; and they would have explained it, if they had been directed in their writings merely by reason and human prudence. Such difficulties left unexplained, prove the truth of the facts, and the inspiration of the evangelists. And these two points established prove all the rest.

This is the reason we ought to set a high value upon an example of a like nature. It is written in St. Mark †, that Jesus Christ speaking of his last coming, the chief circumstances of which he mentions, added these words, which the enemies of his divinity have since turned into their strongest argument against this article of the christian faith: “But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.” The ignorance of the Son is compared with that of the angels; and the term of Son is absolute, without adding the Son of man. Who would not wish that this term had been explained? and which of us would have left it in this harshness, without softening it? but by this procedure we should have spoiled all. The correctives which soften it are in other parts of scripture. It was necessary in this place

† Mark xiii. 32.

PART place for the general interest of the gospel
 III. truths, that one particular point should be re-
 {lated in the very words spoken by Jesus Christ,
 and that these terms, which seem contrary to
 his infinite knowledge, should be left without
 interpretation ; for by this none can suspect the
 evangelists of insincerity, because they appear
 to have been sincere to excess. None can ac-
 cuse them of having followed in their writings
 mere human views, since they disregard them
 in essential points. And thus we have suffi-
 cient grounds always to believe them, because
 they chuse rather to leave some doubts about
 Christ's divinity and omniscience, than weaken
 the truth.

We are astonished when we read in St. John, * that which the Son answered to the holy virgin his mother, who represented to him the want of wine at the marriage feast, where he was present with his disciples : " Woman, said he, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come." This answer, compared with the customary humility and mildness of Jesus Christ, appears a little harsh, and one finds a difficulty to make this agree with that submission for his mother and St. Joseph, of which St. Luke makes mention. But we are more surprized to see this said without reflection, mitigation, or remark. It was easy to have satisfied, and even edified us, by adding something to set this in its true light. Human infirmity seems to

* John ii. 4.

to have needed it. St. John's charity cannot be supposed to have been indifferent and unconcerned. How could he then resolve to leave us in pain? The reason is, because he ingenuously wrote what the Son of God had said, and was ordered to make no addition: the fact was certain; the explanation was forbidden him: he would have made a different relation had he invented it: he would have cleared up our doubts, if he had acted but as an ordinary man.

It was thus St. Luke, who otherwise gives us a high idea of the holy virgin, tells us, † she comprehended not the answer Jesus Christ gave her, when she found him in the temple, and represented to him the uneasiness with which she had sought him: "Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" Such an answer seems to have nothing difficult or obscure in it; and tho' it might contain something which surpasses our knowledge, it does not seem so reasonable it should have surpassed the light of the blessed virgin. The evangelist notwithstanding assures us, ‡ that she comprehended not this answer, and he contents himself with telling us this, without taking

† Luke ii. 48.

‡ "And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them." Luke ii. 50.

PART taking any precaution either in regard of the
 III. holy virgin, or us, and without being sollicitous about our reflections, which he might have stopt with one of his. Nothing is more capable than this, when well understood, to convince us, that he was a faithful historian, since he wrote what was true, without verisimilitude, and what no fiction could ever invent ; and that he was directed by different lights from ours, since he wrote in such a manner as none of us would naturally have chosen.

ARTICLE III.

New proofs : their simplicity, and visible disinterestedness, when they speak of Jesus Christ and his mysteries, tho' they were full of zeal, and love for him, and had a high idea of his actions, doctrine, and mysteries.

THESE observations, which being united mutually strengthen each other, necessarily make a great impression upon minds that are well acquainted with the marks of truth, and instructed in the nature and constitution of mankind. But we have not yet dived into what is profoundest and most inimitable in the character of the evangelists.

Every one knows with what ardor they loved Jesus Christ, and what zeal they had for him ; and yet they speak of his greatest actions, of his
 numberless

numberless miracles, of his sublime doctrine, not CHAP. V.
only without emotion, and without any of those
affections of admiration, and the desire of pro-
ducing the like in others, which are natural on
such occasions, but in terms so simple, so
short, and distant from all affectation, that we
should think, did we not know their senti-
ments otherwise, that they were writing a fo-
reign history, and such a one, as they were
indifferent to.

They had the same ideas of the sufferings
of Jesus Christ, as the prophet Isaiah, and
the other prophets, who foretold him: they
knew the merit and value of them as well as
St. Paul: and yet they give us the history,
without stopping at any circumstance, with-
out mixing any reflections, without intimating
in the least those impressions which the pains
and ignominies of their lord and master make
on them; without once attempting to excite
in others, either compassion, indignation, or
astonishment.

One would even think that they designed to
abridge the account as much as possible, so
little do they dwell on the most important
circumstances. In reality, not one of the evan-
gelists relate them all. We must unite their
histories to have a complete account of the
sufferings of Jesus Christ: and even then it ap-
pears evidently that all is not said.

The flagellation which was so cruel, be-
cause it was designed by Pilate to move the
Jews to compassion, and touch them with
pity, is marked only by one word, and
that

PART that indirectly, in two evangelists *. The un-
 III. heard of outrages they did Jesus Christ in the
 house of Caiphas, and in the Prætorium, where he was exposed to the insults and barbarity of the Roman soldiers, are related in two or three lines. The † crucifixion is passed over in a word. It is occasionally that we are informed in another place, ‡ that Jesus Christ was nailed to a cross, and we should not have been sure of this, but for the history of his resurrection.

Who amongst us would have written in this manner the life of a good man, unjustly oppressed by a wicked multitude? and especially had he been our parent, our friend: had he loaded us with favours, had he died to save us, had he saved our family as well as us, had he delivered our country and state from cruel enemies, by sacrificing himself for the public good; what sentiments would not this have produced in us of gratitude, admiration, love, indignation against his enemies, hatred of their injustice, with an ardent desire of kindling the same emotions in others? Whence happens it then, that men, who worshipped Jesus Christ as their God, who believed themselves redeemed by him from eternal death, and who were persuaded he was sacrificed for their sakes, speak with so much moderation and lenity of his contumelies and sufferings? and how can they, with so much gratitude and love, preserve so great a tranquillity? Here is visibly the

* Matt. xxvii. 20. Mark xv. 15.

† Matt. xxvii. 34.

‡ John xx. 25.

the operation of another spirit than human: CHAP. VII
and the finger of God is here more clearly marked out, than in those prodigies which baffle the sorceries of the magicians who resisted Moses.

For it was on one side so natural to praise the innocence of Jesus Christ, and on the other to inveigh against, and make odious his enemies, to break into complaints at their injustice, that it would have been impossible for the evangelists to be contented with a simple narration, without intermixing some reflections and exclamations, if they had not been conducted by a divine wisdom, superior not only to human reason, but to faith itself, and the virtue of the greatest saints: and if this wisdom had not made itself absolute master of their passions to repress them, and of all the motions of their gratitude and zeal, to moderate their sallies.

Let any one read with this thought the history of the passion in the evangelists, and then judge of what moment it was that all should content themselves with the simple facts, without qualifying them, without charging them with any thing that was not a necessary part of the narration. The envy and fury of the priests against Jesus Christ drew not on them the least invective: the perfidy of Judas is told without the least hatred or bitterness. His insolence in daring to approach Jesus Christ to kiss him, and betray him by this sign of confidence and friendship, excites the indignation of every reader, but extorts not a word from the historian.

PART III. rian. The weakness of Pilate is evident, but the evangelists content themselves with relating the facts which prove it. The pride of Herod, who revenges himself for the silence of Christ, by attributing it to ignorance or folly, well deserved to have been confounded, by revealing the deep wisdom which humbled his pride; but upon this very interesting point all the evangelists observe the same reservedness of expression.

Is it possible, after these reflections, which serve as a preface to many others, we should not perceive, how so constant a conduct on one side, and so superior to nature on the other, must be a character of divinity, which no reason or prejudice can darken?

ARTICLE IV.

It is a double prodigy, that so singular a character should be common to all the apostles.

THIS character so singular in itself, and so surprising, is not that of one single evangelist; it belongs to them all, tho' they wrote in places, and at times quite different; and yet it is equal in all. If the first amongst them served the rest as a model, where had this first an example to follow? was there any such thing before him? have we in all antiquity a history of this nature? is it possible there should have been any? whence

whence comes it therefore, that a publican, CHAR such as St. Matthew, formed to himself so V. perfect an idea of so new a thing, and so sublime a history as that of the Son of God made man, suffering and dying for our salvation? and how could he have attained by a first essay, to so august a simplicity, in comparison of which all human eloquence and reason are but puerility and weakness? For both these qualities would have inspired St. Matthew with a character quite contrary to that which we so justly admire in him.

But if the other evangelists are the imitators of the first, whence came that discretion which made them imitate him in such a manner? how happens it, that they all equally share this distinction from other authors? why were not some of them offended with his apparent simplicity? why did they not prefer to his a style more sprightly, fuller of reflections, of testimonies of zeal for Jesus Christ, and resentment against his enemies? is it easy to comprehend all the grandeur and sublimity in St. Matthew's manner, to penetrate into the true secret of it, and discover the reasons? is it easy, I say, after we have made many reflections, and a long time studied him, so faithfully to imitate him, as never to deviate! To convince ourselves thoroughly in this, we need only at this day, when we have four histories formed on the same plan, make a trial, and we shall find how difficult an imitation would be, especially if we were full of faith and love, if we affectionately

PART esteemed the sufferings of Jesus Christ, and
 III. were inflamed with that celestial fire, with
 which the evangelists burned. For it is in the
 union of these dispositions, with their moderation, reserve, and zeal, that this wonder consists; it is a miracle to love as they did, and another to write with such seeming indifference. But it is a prodigy of grace itself, and the work of the Holy Ghost alone, to unite such fervent love with so dispassionate and cool a style.

ARTICLE V.

None of the evangelists ever took notice of his own moderation, nor of that of others. Neither has it been observed by any of their disciples.

IF the evangelists had acted in this out of human views, and with a design of drawing more belief from an affectation of modesty and simplicity, they never would have been able to have kept up this fraud to the end; artifice cannot be so constant as truth: it betrays itself in the consequence, and gives itself the lie; and the fear of not succeeding by an unobserved and fruitless modesty, makes it willing to set itself off, and hint at least that it acts in a simple disinterested manner; to the end we may be pleased, and put confidence in it.

If

If one of the evangelists had command CHAP. V.
enough over himself, and sufficient address, V.
never to depart from the character he had as-
sumed, it would have been almost impossible
for the others to have preserved the same
attention with the same success: they would
not have failed, by some one of their disciples,
to mark the wise and prudent manner in which
they had written.

Artifice has evermore some confidants, and it
has need of them. For it is neither truth nor the
testimony of a sincere conscience, that support
and comfort it; something else it must have
to bear it up; and success itself, separated
and abstract from the glory of those cares
which made it succeed, is not a sufficient joy
for its pains.

There would therefore have been men from
the time of the apostles, men intrusted with
the secret, who would have made others ad-
mire the character of the evangelists, their
disinterestedness, their modesty, their unaf-
fected simplicity, and who would not have failed
of making many reflections on the attention of
the evangelists in making none at all. Af-
terwards, this proof would have been insisted
on; the strength and validity of it would have
been shewn; and nothing would have been
better known, or more celebrated than this
beautiful character, so nobly supported by the
first sacred penmen, and so wisely unfolded by
their most learned disciples.

PART
III.

ARTICLE VI.

The difference betwixt them, and the prophets who are so full of reflections and emotions, is an evident proof that the Spirit of God conducted both.

WHAT makes the moderation of the evangelists still more surprizing is, that they had before their eyes the example of the prophets, who gave a loose to the warmest emotions, tho' they saw not but in a distant futurity an image of those things whereof the evangelists were spectators. Isaiah is full of sentiments of gratitude, and exhausts his imagination in reflections, when he discovers afar the sufferings and ignominies of Christ. "It is he, says he, * who truly charges himself with our sorrows, and suffers what it is but just we should suffer. He was wounded for our iniquities : he was bruised for our crimes. The chastisement, that reconciles us, has fallen upon him ; and it is by his wounds that we have been cured. We were all gone astray like lost sheep : but God has laid upon him all our iniquities. He offered himself because he would, and opened not his mouth : he suffered himself to be led to slaughter, like a sheep : and he was like a lamb before the hand of him that shears him."

David

* Isaiah liii. 4, &c.

David in a transport not only sees the cross, and Calvary, but expresses himself in the person of our Saviour: and whereas Christ remained silent, without making reproaches or menaces to those who had procured and were the ministers of his death, this prophet treats them as lions and mad dogs, who feed themselves with his sufferings, and wait with impatience for the hour of his death. "They have pierced my hands and feet, says he in the person of Christ, * "they have counted all my bones: they consider me with attention: they have divided my garments amongst them. Deliver, O Lord, my soul from the violence of dogs, deliver me from the throat of the lion. Young bulls have surrounded me: fat and strong bulls have besieged me." Why do the evangelists say nothing of this nature? Why do they not imitate the tender expressions of Isaiah? Why are they so calm, they who were present at every thing, whilst the prophets, separated from the accomplishment of the mysteries of redemption by so many ages, are so touched and moved with them?

With what anathemas is not the six psalm filled against the Jews, the enemies of Jesus Christ, and in particular against Judas, whose treason was prefigured by that of Achitophel? And in psal. lxxix, where David speaks in the person of our Saviour, are there not likewise a multitude of maledictions against those who were the authors of his death? "They have fed me with gall, says he, and in my thirst they

* Psalm xxii.

PART " have given me vinegar to drink. Let their
 III. " table [the scriptures are understood] become
 " to them a net and a snare; let their eyes be
 " covered with darkness, and let them always
 " stoop down to the earth. Pour forth, O
 " Lord, thy wrath upon them, and let thy
 " indignation overwhelm them. Let their
 " habitation be desert, and let none dwell
 " in their houses. * Because they persecuted
 " him whom thou hadst smitten, and have
 " added new wounds to my pains. Let them
 " therefore add iniquity to iniquity: let them
 " not enter into thy righteousness: let them
 " be blotted out from the book of the living;
 " and let not their names be written amongst
 " those of the just." The evangelists knew
 these maledictions, and they saw their accom-
 plishment. Why therefore took they no notice
 of them, and so severely with-held themselves
 at the very time they were so justly merited?

The conspiracy of the Jews and Gentiles, as
 also of Herod and Pilate, against Jesus Christ,
 has been lively represented in another psalm, as
 an open rebellion against Jesus Christ, and God
 himself. " Why, says the prophet †, have the
 " nations assembled themselves in tumult, and
 " why have the people imagined vain things?
 " The kings of the earth have stood up toge-
 " ther, and the princes have conspired against
 " the Lord and his anointed." (The church of
 Jerusalem, full of the Holy Ghost, understands
 these words, of Herod, Pilate, the Jews and
 Gentiles.) " But, continues the royal prophet,
 " he

* This signifies the dispersion and exile of the Jews.

† Psalm ii.

“ he who dwells in heaven will laugh them
“ to scorn, the Lord will have them in deri-
“ sion : he will speak to them in his wrath :
“ and he will fill them with fear and confu-
“ sion in his indignation.” Why are not these
words, so full of grandeur and majesty, re-
peated by the evangelists? and why, when
they relate the reconciliation of Herod and
Pilate, who are combined only to oppress
Christ, do not they confound their pride by a
prophecy, which so clearly foretells their va-
nity and weakness?

But it is by this conduct God has particular-
ly evidenced the divinity of the scriptures, and
the efficacy of that Spirit which inspired them.
It was worthy of the Holy Ghost, to shew so
clearly and lively to the prophets those future
mysteries, that they should look on them as
present, and as accomplishing before their
eyes; to fill them with sentiments conform-
able to the spectacle that was presented to
them; to inspire them with indignation a-
gainst Christ's enemies; with tenderness and
gratitude towards him; with desire of ven-
geance on such injustice: and to render
them his associates as judge of all mankind,
making them pronounce in his name such sen-
tences, as seem imprecations and curses, when
we consider only the persons of the prophets;
but are immutable decrees of divine justice,
when we consider the prophets as God's inter-
preters.

There is none but God alone who can
discover futurity with this certainty, evidence,

PART and strong impression. Human conjectures
III. have nothing of this nature : they are confused
and uncertain, mixed with fear and obscurity,
and by consequence incapable of strongly moving the mind, and stirring up those passionate motions for uncertain indistinct objects. Hesitation is their character ; and the necessary consequences of this hesitation are a real timidity and false modesty.

Tranquillity and moderation were not therefore proper for the prophets : they would have weakened the truth by relating it simply : it was necessary to support it by reflections, and lively sentiments, whilst it was as yet at a distance : it was necessary to approach it in perspective, and make it sensible when its accomplishment was to be deferred for several ages ; and none could attribute the passionate motions of the prophets, but to the certainty and evidence of the mysteries, because the objects of them had no relation with their persons, interests, or age.

But nothing of this nature was proper for those who had seen the accomplishment of the prophecies, and whom God chose to inform all mankind. Reflections then would have added nothing to the truth, but would have only served to render it suspected : events needed no more than a simple narration, and nothing became sincerity so well as modesty.

Yet men conduct themselves in a quite contrary manner. They are modest when they speak of futurity, and full of boldness and pride when their conjectures have been right,
They

They are timorous and hesitating, where CHAP. V.
the prophets have been firm and positive; and are sure to take advantage of every circumstance which the evangelists overlooked and omitted. They are little moved, where the prophets are most affected; and they are on the contrary lively and passionate, where the evangelists are modest and calm. Who could put this difference betwixt the conduct of men, when they act naturally, and the conduct which the prophets and evangelists have observed. What could make the prophets so ardent, and the evangelists so calm? What power inspired Isaiah with such tender sentiments, before Christ was sacrificed for us? and who is it that restrained the same temper in the evangelists, and especially in St. John, a faithful witness of all, and distinguished from the others by the tender love of his master? These two characters, in appearance so opposite, but so worthy of the Spirit of God, could never have been the effect but of his own wisdom and power: and there could be none but he, to whom all ages are present, and who is master of the thoughts and hearts of men, that could discern and put in execution what was suitable both to future and accomplished mysteries, to the prophets charged with the prediction, and the evangelists who were entrusted with writing the history.

The evangelists and apostles have sealed with their blood what they have written. The strength of this proof in relation to the first founders of a religion. Had they not been the disciples of Jesus Christ, they would not have deserved to have been believed. Miracles ought not to be suspected merely because they are miracles. The scriptures of the new testament are essentially united. They are not like those of the old testament, peculiar to one nation.

ARTICLE I.

The evangelists have sealed with their blood what they have written.

WE have seen with astonishment what care divine providence has taken to render the testimony the evangelists have given to Jesus Christ superior to all suspicion, and to unite in their persons and writings all the possible characters of sincerity and truth. But there is a last, which crowns all the rest, and cannot agree but with inspired writers, and divine writings.

The evangelists have sealed with their blood what they have written. They have, like the ancient prophets, given their lives to strengthen the truth : and after a thousand cares and labours, they have sacrificed themselves to add
to

to their testimony the respect and veneration of CHAP.
a sacrifice. VI.

What history ever had such a proof of truth? what witnesses shall we believe, if we believe not those, who suffered death for what they attested? Is there out of the true religion any thing of a similar nature. Can one find elsewhere men who have given their lives to ascertain facts which others contested? and what excuse remains for those who believe so many things upon the word of historians, if they refuse to believe men full of zeal and charity, who esteemed themselves happy in dying for them, and for inculcating the verities of the gospel?

What can in reality obscure a proof of so great brightness, and strength? can falsehood hope for any thing after this life? is not all untruth and imposture necessarily timid? does not a conscience which artifice and delusion cannot impose on, shew its steadiness on a critical occasion? does not death tear off the vizard from hypocrisy and dissimulation? and do not the torments that precede a violent death, banish a vain appearance of courage which is founded upon nothing solid? For where would be the interest of such an imposture? who would sacrifice his life to a known phantom? who would in such an article expect any advantage from a fiction of which he himself was the author? and how could he support at the same time cruel torments, and his own reproaches?

The

PART

III. The world never saw; nor ever will see any thing of this nature. A man may sacrifice his life to a false glory; but it is unheard of, that any man should chuse death to attest a falsity, evidently and certainly known. And this is the more inconceivable, when we must be forced to suppose the same phrenzy in several, contrary to all natural principles and sentiments.

ARTICLE II.

Strength of this argument in relation to the founders of a religion.

WE ought to make a great difference betwixt men seduced by an error, which has gained credit and is become popular, and the first seducers. It is not impossible but that men deceived, should give to some writings an authority which they deserve not, and that delusion, strengthen'd by time and prejudice, may induce them to suffer something for their defence, or if you please, to give even their life to witness their truth. Conscience then takes place of truth and light, tho' it be in the dark: the fear of God gives a real strength to it; and all the sentiments that spring from this fear, may support those who are not deceived but in regard of the object, and who are persuaded in other respects with an absolute certainty: for it is not doubtful to them, but that they are obliged to suffer every thing for religion, and that it would be a great crime in them to do the contrary.

But

But this cannot hold good in respect to the CHAP. VI.
first seducers; for all that can strengthen se-
duced persons, makes against them. They
must resist truth, conscience, and God himself.
They must bear up against all that supports
others; and this for no other end, but to
suffer torment, and death itself, without hoping
for any good from so obstinate a folly; and
this with a well grounded fear of being pu-
nished by that eternal Truth which they have
outrageously offended.

Whoever believes this possible, knows not
nature, nor himself. It is endeavouring to
render every thing doubtful, to oppose such
an evidence, and certainty, with ill-ground-
ed diffidence; and it is rejecting all evidence,
not to believe witnesses who shed their blood,
and had no other motives of doing so, but
to spread every where mutual love, truth, and
benevolence.

ARTICLE III.

*If the evangelists had not been disciples
of Jesus Christ, they would not have
deserved belief; so far is it from be-
ing true that they ought to be suspected
on that account.*

BUT some perhaps will say, Do not such
professed and zealous witnesses shew too
much passion? should you not quote others,
as sincere, but less prejudiced? Historians who
declare themselves disciples, weaken the first
of

PART of these qualities by the second; and would
 III. not the certainty of facts be better established
 by persons who were well instructed, but less
 interested?

Is it being interested to lay down one's life for the truth? is it in such a circumstance an historian ought to be suspected? and if we refuse to believe him; because he spilt his blood to gain our belief, what other proof do we look for beyond this? I own it is the duty of a common historian to shew neither zeal, nor affection; but it is easy to see, that in regard of religion it would be injustice to expect any thing of this nature, and that such a disposition is not possible: for whoever saw the miracles of Jesus Christ, and knew their certainty, must have been moved with them: whoever felt the force of those proofs which Christ gave of his mission, ought to believe him the Messiah promised in the scriptures; and whoever did so, ought to have become his disciple. Indifference and neutrality are not possible, but inasmuch as they are mixed with doubt; doubt itself is not possible, but for want of knowledge, or examination; and an historian who has examined nothing, is ill qualified to teach others. An historian must be sure of his facts to satisfy us: he must have seen the things, when he speaks of them as an ocular witness. It is not then possible, he should be indifferent about things he has seen, and believes indubitably certain; and when these things necessarily carry along with

with them persuasion and faith, it is impossible such an historian should write without being persuaded and sincere. CHAP. VI.

It is for this reason that a passage in Josephus is suspected of being suppositious, where mention is made of Jesus Christ: for it is known, that on one side by an unworthy * flattery he has applied to Vespasian what the prophets had foretold of Christ: and we cannot comprehend on the other, he would have written of Jesus, that he was the † Christ, and not have believed in him, by uniting himself to the christians. These two reflections joined together, make the supposition evident, and the last would suffice tho' alone; nothing being more contrary to reason, than publicly to acknowledge Jesus for the Messiah, and refuse to listen to, and obey him.

Yet there might have been something of truth in the passage of Josephus, if we separate what seems too strong, and appears added to the discourse it interrupts. For if it be contrary to probability, that this historian has acknowledged Jesus for the Messiah, it is perhaps against probability likewise, that he has not spoken of him at all: but he has contented himself with general terms, which shew indeed a vague consideration, but enter not into any detail, and evidently prove, of what service to us would have been a number of historians like Josephus, as negligent and careless

* Joseph. l. 7. de bell. Judai. c. 12.

† Joseph. l. 18. antiq. c. 4.

PART less in regard to Christ, and for that reason as
 III. indifferent.

An exact knowledge of the miracles which Christ wrought, is inseparable from persuasion; and such a persuasion is the same thing as faith, to which it necessarily leads. For when facts are divine and miraculous, we cannot look on them as certain, without considering them as testimonies which God himself has given of certain truths; and then these truths, and the religion of which they are a part, cannot be looked upon any longer as either doubtful, or indifferent.

ARTICLE IV.

The miracles they mention ought not to be suspected on this account, that they are miracles. If they had been less public, and less extraordinary, it would have been prudent to have been diffident.

BUT it is the miracles themselves, a stranger perhaps or infidel will say, which are difficult to be believed, and incline us to doubt of the evangelists sincerity. For it is just to be diffident of whatever is extraordinary, and we can never examine too scrupulously what deviates from the customary order of things, especially when such prodigies are pleaded in favour of a particular religion.

The

The true religion fears not such an examination, on the contrary it requires and desires it as necessary: for it is by this it distinguishes itself from those sects that are founded on nothing but fiction and delusion, and who find no difficulty in inventing false prodigies. But while we inquire into miracles, we must not suppose there can be none that are certain and indisputable, nor call in question God's power over nature, which is nothing but what he has willed; nor has any other essential laws but what the divine liberty has prescribed.

That we examine therefore with the strictest rigour those witnesses, who assure us, that they have seen the miracles of Christ, is what I not only consent, but I exhort you to it, and have even set an example. But after such an examination, remember that miracles are not less certain for being exceptions to the general order of things: and that it would be depriving the Deity of all the means of proving to us his designs and mysteries, to be always diffident of what is extraordinary and surprizing.

In effect, those who endeavour thus to weaken the miracles of Christ, would demand them as an indispensible and necessary proof, was it said he had wrought none. They would have explained by natural ways, such as were not evidently above the power of nature. They would have called for manifest and most surprizing miracles, such as nothing could obscure, viz. the resurrection

PART from the dead, or the cure of one born blind.

III. They would have required, that they should have been wrought in public, thoroughly examined, and in such a number, that a whole nation might have been witnesses. They are therefore visibly unjust to refuse the very proofs they would have asked ; to be distrustful of them because they have the marks they would have demanded, and to seek in their lustre and number, a pretext to doubt of them, the very men who would have thought their doubts well grounded, if these miracles had been less frequent or extraordinary.

ARTICLE V.

God has united in the evangelists all that is capable of producing a full and perfect persuasion.

WE have therefore nothing to do for the future, but to join together all the proofs that we have of the exactness and sincerity of the evangelists and apostles, to admire the care God has taken to unite in them all that is capable of making an impression upon a well disposed mind, and form a compleat, a perfect, and full persuasion. They are all cotemporaries, ocular witnesses, well instructed in all things, in which they themselves had a great and interesting share. They are in great number, and tho' they have writ-

ten separately, in different times and places, CHAP. they are perfectly unanimous in the funda- VI. mental and chief circumstances. It is notwithstanding evident, by the differences that have been observed, that they wrote not by agreement, and that it is truth alone which has united them. They speak of themselves, of their ignorance, of their weaknesses, of their faults, with an unparalleled ingenuousness. They are contented to write with simplicity naked facts, without taking any advantage from them, without explaining those which seem to need it, without making any reflections upon those which interest themselves the most, and without mixing in their narration either complaints, invectives, or exhortations, tho' they appear full of zeal, and write not, but to spread over the world the faith of the gospel. In a word, they expose themselves to all, suffer all, and this to attest the truth of what they write. They all equally offer themselves to death, and several amongst them lay down their lives to give the last sanction to their words. And they teach all those who hear them, to die for the same truths, and preserve, without alteration, the books wherein they are written. If there has been any thing of this nature since the beginning of the world; if there be any facts amongst those that are the most certain and incontestable, which have the same proofs and characteristics of truth; if it be possible, in not believing the evangelists, to believe any thing on the testimony of men; we may then

PART indeed doubt of the history of the gospel;

III. for there is no comparison betwixt its certainty and that of all such facts as depend on the veracity of writers.

ARTICLE VI.

The writings of the new testament are in such a manner united with each other, that we must either admit, or reject them all.

BEFORE we finish this subject, I must observe two important things. The first, that all the writings of the new testament are so connected together, by an essential and necessary relation, that we cannot separate them, but must look upon them all as sincere, or all fictitious, because the same facts and mysteries are spoken of in all. The history of the acts of the apostles supposes that of the evangelists. St. Paul's epistles have both for their basis: the epistles of St. Peter, St. James, and St. John, have a close union with those of St. Paul. Even St. Jude's, tho' very short, recalls to mind all the essentials of the christian religion. We must receive, or reject them all: choice and distinction are impossible and useless; and however small a part we reserved, it would revive the rest. Now, after this let any one examine, how he could go about to reject all, and particularly to persuade the world that the acts of the apostles are fictitious, or what is

still more chimerical and absurd, that the epistles of St. Paul are spurious.

CHAP.
VI.

ARTICLE VII.

The writings of the new testament are not like those of the old, peculiar to one people.

THE second observation is, that the writings of the new testament are not like those of the old, addressed to a single people, separated from all the rest by their manners and language, whose tradition by consequence was less public, or spread abroad; but that they were addressed equally to all the nations of the world, and in the most common tongue, to the Romans, Macedonians, Corinthians, Ephesians, Galatians, * Parthians, Hebrews of Palestine, the dispersed Jews, or twelve tribes. All those people I have mentioned must therefore necessarily have had, in the times of the apostles, the scriptures which were sent to them, and must have been able to shew the originals. † And here remains but two parties to take, either to agree with all the

H 3 nations

* The epistle of St. John was written to the Parthians, according to the ancients. St. Paul wrote to the Hebrews of Palestine; St. Peter to the dispersed Jews; St. James to the twelve tribes.

† Age jam qui voles curiositatem melius exercere in negotio salutis tuæ; percurre ecclesias apostolicas, apud quas ipsæ adhuc cathedræ apostolorum suis locis præsident: apud quas ipsæ authenticæ litteræ eorum recitantur, sonantes vocem, & representantes faciem uniuscujusque. Proxima est tibi Achaia? habes Corinthum si non longe es à Macedonia, habes Philippos, habes Thessalonicenses. Si potes in Asiam tendere, habes Ephesum.

Si

PART nations of the earth, that their scriptures are
 III. derived from the apostles, and that all which
 they contain is exactly conformable to what
 these nations had seen in these divine men, or
 had learnt from them; or to suppose in all
 the people of the world a conspiracy to in-
 vent scriptures, whose doctrine and senti-
 ments are so worthy of inspired men; that the
 whole world has been imposed on, without
 any one having had the least suspicion of the
 artifice, or the secret having been discovered by
 so many accomplices. Unless we will run in-
 to another absurdity, equally contrary to reason,
 and suppose that all nations have looked upon as
 sincere, and even divine writings, such whose fal-
 sity was known to them, the supposed authors
 having neither done or said any thing amongst
 them of a like nature, with what those scrip-
 tures mention, tho' those very authors appeal
 to them as witnesses and warrants. It would
 be offering violence to equity and good sense,
 to insist longer on this head; and if such an
 evidence suffices not for some minds, religion is
 sufficiently revenged of their opposition by their
 blindness.

C H A P.

Si autem Italiæ adjaces, habes Romam, unde nobis quoque au-
 toritas præsto est. Ista quam felix ecclesia, cui totam doctrinam
 apostoli cum suo sanguine profuderunt: ubi Petrus passioni do-
 minicæ adæquatur: ubi Paulus Joannis exitu coronatur: ubi
 apostolus Joannes, postea quam in oleum igneum demersus, nihil
 passus est, in insulam relegatur. Tertull. de præscript. c. 36. p. 245.

Ecquid verisimile est ut tot ac tantæ (ecclesiæ) in unam fidem
 erraverint: nullus, inter multos, eventus unus est. Exitus vari-
 asse debuerat error doctrinæ ecclesiarum. Cæterum, quod apud
 multos unum invenitur, non est erratum, sed traditum. Tertull.
 de præscript. c. 28. p. 241.

Proofs, that the scriptures of the new testament VII.
are divine, and that the authors of them were inspired. Why the evangelists and apostles imitated not the old prophets, in saying; Behold, thus says the Lord. First proof of the divinity and inspiration of the scriptures of the new testament: without this, the doctrine of Jesus Christ and his mysteries, would not have had any divine certainty in respect to us; and the writings of the new testament would have been much inferior to those of the old. Second proof; Jesus Christ did not only communicate his authority to his apostles, but likewise his wisdom and spirit, without which his authority would have been useless. Third proof; the apostles have mixt no human doctrine in the gospel. Fourth proof; they themselves assure us, that they were inspired; and they condemn the least doubt on this head. Fifth proof; they compare the truth of their words with the certainty and immobility of those promises which God is author of, and Christ the warrant. Sixth proof; St. Paul assures us, that the gospel which he preaches has nothing human in it; that he received it immediately from Christ; and that no alteration is to be made in it: the same is to be said of the other evangelists and apostles. Seventh proof; it is essential to the true religion, to be divine; essential to the scriptures, which are its depositaries, to be divine too; and lastly, it is essential to its first founders, to be inspired. Had they not declared themselves such, they would not have deserved credit. Certainty, that the scriptures of the new testament have not been altered.

ARTICLE I.

*Why the evangelists and apostles imitate
not the ancient prophets in declaring,
as they, Thus says the Lord.*

THE fruit of the enquiries I have made hitherto, has not ended merely in convincing me of the truth of the writings that compose the new testament, and of the sincerity of the authors ; for I have met with several things which persuade me, that these scriptures are divine, and their authors really inspired. But as this point is important, I ought not to content myself with certain prejudices which some observations may have produced , but descend to a particular examination, which cannot but be highly profitable.

We may be surprized that the prophets of the old testament repeat so often, Behold, thus says the Lord ; while the evangelists and apostles never use this expression, which seems so proper to signify a divine mission, and prophetic inspiration. But we ought not to confound times. When * God spoke to our forefathers, upon divers occasions, and in different manners, to discover to them the future mysteries of Jesus Christ, it was necessary to admonish mankind, that it was God who spoke ; but after he spoke to us by his Son clothed with our flesh, and after the accomplishment of those mysteries, we must only listen

* Heb. i. 1.

listen to the Son; we must only repeat his words; and it is not necessary to forewarn men, that it is the Lord who speaks, when we repeat what the Son has said. CHAP. VII.

It is for the same reason, that when they mention predictions which regard futurity, they substitute instead of the ancient expression, "Behold, thus says the Lord," this new one, * "Behold, what says the Holy Ghost," or, "The Holy Ghost ordains," "or, The Holy Ghost declares," that the new prophecies may be distinguished which have a particular object, from those which have been accomplished in Christ, who is hereafter to be the only master we are to listen to.

Whatever we draw from these reflections, it is certain none can dispute the quality of prophets with the apostles: the little I have quoted suffices, and we shall hereafter have infallible proofs. Therefore we are to conclude nothing from their not making use of this formula of the old testament.

* "Thus saith the Holy Ghost." Acts xxi. 11.

"The Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul." Acts xiii. 2.

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times." 1 Tim. iv. 1.

ARTICLE

ARTICLE II.

First proof, that the scriptures of the new testament are divine, and their authors inspired. Without this, the doctrine of Jesus Christ and his mysteries would not have in our regard any divine certainty, and the scriptures of the new testament would be very much inferior to those of the old.

IT is not even their gift of prophecy that I examine at present, if it be strictly limited to the knowledge of future things. My design is to discern whether the writings, which are left us by the evangelists and apostles, be divine and inspired. And to succeed in this enquiry, I begin by supposing what is certain, that Christ wrote nothing, and that we should neither know what he did or said, but by means of his disciples. Upon this I ground this plain reasoning: Either the doctrine of Christ, and the knowledge of his mysteries, have been preserved as pure as if the church had immediately received them from himself, and he had dictated those scriptures which contain them; or they have been altered in some regards, lost their first purity, and by consequence their certainty, by passing through the mouths of the apostles.

Supposing

Supposing the first; the scriptures must un-CHAP.
doubtedly be divine, because they have all the VII.
authority of Christ himself, and have been
directed by his Light and Spirit.

But in the second supposition, they would have been altered by a mixture of the spirit of man with the Spirit of God: whereby they would no longer serve me as a sure rule, either of faith or manners, for I should fear with reason to take for divine what was not; and as I should have no sure criterion to distinguish by, I should be forced to distrust them all, and thereby they would become useless to me.

By a necessary consequence, all that Christ came to do in the world, and all he designed to teach us, would become entirely uncertain, because the scriptures, which kept the depositum of faith, would be rendered doubtful. Thus all the mystery of his incarnation would vanish. And whereas we might have said before his coming, the † Messiah will tell as all things, and resolve all our doubts in regard of religion; we ought to say after his ascension into heaven, that he multiplied our uncertainty, by suffering all divine verities to be obscured in the world; and that he has even destroyed all possibility of our ever being infallibly satisfied, because after him we have neither a new master or interpreter to look for, and the church can never be more enlightened than the apostles, nor more sure of those truths

† Jehn iv. 25.

PART truths she has received by their channels, which
 III. are supposed thus weakened.

There would be thus an extreme difference betwixt the scriptures of the old testament, which are manifestly inspired, tho' they contain but promises and figures, and those of the new, which would have been abandoned to human fallibility, tho' the latter contain what God has wrought of a most miraculous nature for mankind, what is essential to religion and salvation, and is to subsist to the end of ages. And the heavenly Father, who has regulated by his Spirit all the expressions of the prophets who foretold his Son, would have only employed human wisdom and reason to preserve the doctrine of his church, and the mysteries of his Son, who is made the high-priest of future blessings, and the mediator of the everlasting covenant.

It will be answered, perhaps, that there is a medium betwixt the two extremes, because the scriptures of the new testament may be certain without being divine, and the truths taught by Christ may have been preserved without mixture or alteration, tho' they were not inspired.

But without contesting at present what is here advanced, I ask how I can be sure of that? There may be, you say, a medium betwixt the two extremes. I will suppose it for a moment. But mere possibility is not the object of christian faith. Its character is not only to be certain, but immutable; and by consequence, its object ought to be so. 'The apostles might
 have

have preserved, you will say, the doctrine of CHAP.
Christ in its perfect purity, without any VII.
other succour but that of reason and memory: ~~~~~
they might have done so; but have they done
it? or if they have done it, can they then have
given me such certain proofs that I cannot doubt
of it? when I find expressions that are diffi-
cult and contrary in appearance to one another,
when the greatest truths are in question, and I
must answer heretics that will misconstrue
a word or a syllable, shall I be confirm-
ed in my faith, by endeavouring to per-
suade myself that men who followed nothing
but a natural light, have written not a tittle
but divine truth?

ARTICLE III.

*Second proof. Jesus Christ not only
communicated his authority to the
apostles, but likewise his spirit and
wisdom; without which his authority
would have been useless.*

IT was not in this manner Jesus Christ
constituted his apostles * masters over the
whole world. When he commissioned them to
instruct

* “ All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go
ye therefore and teach all nations. Matt. xxviii. 18.

“ As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And
when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto
them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost. John xx. 21.

“ Then opened he their understanding, that they might un-
derstand the scriptures. Luke xxiv. 45.

PART instruct all nations, he communicated to them

III. not only his authority but his divine knowledge and light, without which their mission would have been useless. When he told them on the day of his resurrection, that he sent them as his Father had sent him, he breathed visibly on them, to communicate to them his Spirit; and by substituting them in his place, he gave them wherewithal to supply it with dignity, by discovering to them the depth of scripture, and opening their minds with a supernal light, to the end they might have a true understanding of them.

By this he gave them the power, not only of saying as the ancient prophets, *Thus says the Lord*, but of holding his place, continuing his work, and speaking in his name. And this is, in effect, what St. Paul says of himself in the name of all the others: * “ Now “ then, says he to the Corinthians, we are “ ambassadors for Christ, as tho’ God did “ beseech you by us.” Never did any of the prophets speak of their ministry in a more august manner, nor bore a more evident testimony of their inspiration. † “ We are not, “ says still the same apostle, as many, which “ corrupt the word of God, but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God, “ speak we in Christ.” This is what fixes the mind, and is the foundation of faith. Otherwise we should never know whether the word of God was unmixed or adulterated; whether the revelation comes down

to

* 2 Cor. v. 20.

† 2 Cor. ii. 17.

to us without mixture, or whether the CHAP. traditions and fancies of men have alter- VII. ed it? * I willingly listen to a man, who pretends to be a teacher of all nations, only because he is the faithful disciple of truth, of which he takes Christ himself to witness, who elected him to spread his doctrine. And I am not less disposed than the Galatians, † to receive him as an angel, or as Christ himself, because he preaches nothing to me but what Christ himself would preach to me in person, and therefore only supplies his place in my regard by his presence and voice.

For it is proper to observe, that what Christ had begun by his public ministry, the apostles continued after his death, by preaching in Judea, and amongst the Gentiles: that it was the same work, conducted by the same spirit, and supported by the same power: that there was no difference but in the ministers, and not in the certainty and purity of the doctrine. For otherwise Christ would have left his work imperfect, or have even destroyed it, by substituting successors incapable of maintaining it.

* 1 Tim. ii. 7. † Gal. iv. 14.

ARTICLE IV.

Third proof. The apostles have mixed no human doctrine in the gospel.

WHAT confirms me in this belief, is the care the apostles took of adding nothing foreign or human in the preaching of the gospel, and the reasons they had to do so: for they not only designed to preserve the word of God down to us pure, but would have our faith grounded on it. And they were so far from altering the simplicity of the gospel, that it was on this simplicity they made its efficacy and virtue depend †. I have not employed in speaking and preaching to you, said St. Paul to the faithful, the persuasive words of human reason, but the evident effects of the Spirit and power of God: that your faith might not be established on the wisdom of men, but the power of God. Human wisdom, as well as eloquence, is therefore excluded. Divine faith can be founded on neither. Its only foundation is the word of God attested by his power, that is to say, revelation confirmed by miracle. And this is what the same apostle calls *the doctrine of the Spirit*, because 'tis its divine light that reveals it, and its miraculous power that proves it. ‡ We have not received the spirit of the world, says he, but the Spirit of God, that we may

† 1 Cor. ii. 4.

‡ 1 Cor. ii. 13.

may know the gifts which God has given us. CHAP. VII.
This is the source from whence flows the gospel light. And we preach them, * not with those discourses which human wisdom teaches, (it is therefore excluded with its language) but with such discourses as are taught by the Holy Ghost, using in spiritual mysteries only spiritual words. Here is expressly the inspiration of words mentioned; because it is the Holy Ghost who teaches them; for otherwise there would be a visible disproportion betwixt the sublime truths he alone can teach, and human words that explain them.

ARTICLE V.

Fourth proof. They assure us themselves that they were inspired; and they condemn the least doubt on this head.

BUT the care we take to prove by consequences, that the apostles and their discourses were inspired, is not necessary; because they speak it openly, and look upon the least doubt as a criminal infidelity. "Since ye seek, says St. Paul † to the "Corinthians, a proof of Christ speaking "by me?" nothing then could have been more full or general than this. It is Jesus Christ who speaks: St. Paul is but his organ:

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gan:

* Εγ διδασκτοῖς πνεύματος ἁγίου λόγοις. 1 Cor. ii. 13.

† Ἐπεὶ δοκιμὴν ἐτείτε τὸ ζῆν ἐμοὶ λαλῶντος Χριστοῦ

2 Cor. xiii. 3.

PART gan: and if any one doubts, Christ is ready
 III. to employ his omnipotency to confound the
 incredulous.

The same apostle in another place, not only establishes this truth, but likewise the principle on which it is founded. "Who can know, * says "he, the thought and design of the Lord, or "who can instruct him? but for us, we have "the knowledge and Spirit of Jesus Christ." It is he who thinks in us: it is he, who is our knowledge and understanding. Otherwise how should we be able by our conjectures to penetrate his sentiments and designs? "There is || "only the spirit of man, which knows what "man thinks. Thus none know the mind of "God, but the Spirit of God which penetrates "all things, even what is the most pro- "found and hidden." We should expose ourselves to give our own imaginations for his thoughts, if he had not revealed them to us; and therefore by a necessary consequence, we should be exposed, to weaken the divine notions, had not he himself suggested proper expressions.

Wherefore this great apostle fears not to say, that the contempt shewn to his words, falls upon God himself, who has given him his Holy Spirit; † and it is upon this ground that he assures the Thessalonians, that they were not deceived in listening to his words, as if they were the word of God

* *Nov. Kupis.* 1 Cor. ii. 16.

† *Ibid.* ver. 11 and 10.

‡ 1 Thess. iv. 8.

God himself, because in effect they were CHAP.
so: not as the word of man, but, as it is in VII.
truth, the word of God. * Strong and pre-
cise terms, which prove that both the things
signified, and the expressions, were of God;
and that the same veneration was due alike
to both, because they had the same prin-
ciple.

ARTICLE VI.

*The fifth proof. They compare the
truth of their words to the certainty
and immutability of those promises,
which God is the author, and Christ
the voucher of.*

IT is for this that the same St. Paul (whom
I quote oftener than the rest, but who speaks
in the name of all, because 'tis on the same sub-
ject) cannot bear being suspected of variation or
levity in his words; but he compares them to
the promises, which are made us in Christ
Jesus, and gives us as a proof of them, the
same miracles which attested the verity of the
gospel. " Having had the design, says he to
" the Corinthians, † to see you in my passage to
" Macedonia, do you think it is out of in-
" constancy I have not executed it? or when
" I take a resolution, is it meerly human? is
" it thus you find yes and no in me? but God,
" who is my witness, knows there is not yes
" and no in the discourses I have held to you.

I 2

" For

* 1 Theff. ii. 13.

† 2 Cor. i. 17.

PART " For Jesus Christ the Son of God, who has
 III. " been preached to you, is incapable of yes
 " and no, being constancy and truth itself ;
 " for it is in him, that all the promises of
 " God are * yes and amen, that is to say, cer-
 " tainty and truth."

I know nothing in all the scriptures more strong or majestic, to prove how far the inspiration of the apostles extended, when they wrote, or spoke to the faithful ; because those designs which appear arbitrary, and promises which seem to have been only human, were the effect of a supernatural wisdom and light.

And this is what explains to us the cause of that anathema or curse, which St. Paul pronounces not only against false preachers, but against an angel of heaven, that should preach a gospel different from what he had preached, nay even against himself, should he ever vary and change any thing of his first instructions. For being fully persuaded, that he had been only the organ and interpreter of the Holy Ghost in all he had said, and in the manner he had said it, he was convinced he could make no change in it, but by an human spirit; and should he have the rashness to do it, he judged his own anathema ought to take place against himself. † " Tho' we should preach to
 " you ourselves, says he, or even an angel from
 " heaven, a gospel different from that you
 " have received, let him be accursed." I have no need of examining this new gospel,

* Ἐν αὐτῷ τὸ ναὶ, καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ τὸ ἀμήν.

† Gal. i. 8.

it is sufficient that it be new, and should I al-
 ter what I have already preached, you are ex-
 cused from examining my alterations. Call me
 accursed, when you find I vary; for I am then
 a man abandoned to my own spirit, and I have
 no longer an authority over you; and the Spi-
 rit of God who inspired me with what you
 have believed, gives you the right of rejecting
 me as a seducer, and enemy of your faith: "for
 " I declare to you, (these are the terms of the
 " apostle) * that the gospel which I have
 " preached to you is not after man; for I
 " neither received nor learnt it of man, but by
 " the revelation of Jesus Christ."

ARTICLE VII.

*Sixth proof. St. Paul assures us, that
 the gospel he preached has nothing
 human, that he received it imme-
 diately from Jesus Christ, and that
 no change is to be made in it: and
 the same may be said of the other
 evangelists and apostles.*

THERE is in these words a profounder
 meaning than is commonly thought, and
 when they are well understood, they spread a
 great light over the question I treat of. St. Paul
 unites these three truths: that no change is to be
 made in the gospel he preached; that this gos-
 pel has nothing human; and that it is Christ
 himself who has revealed it. He proves the first
 of these verities by the second, and the second by

PART third. But was not this a personal thing? for

III. might not he have been the only one amongst the apostles, whom Christ taught immediately the divine truths of the gospel without the ministry of men? Others saw him act, or heard his discourse, or were witnesses of his miracles; and in this sense they might be said not to have learnt the gospel but from him alone. But they discover to us themselves with a wonderful candor, that they did not attentively observe the actions of Christ, tho' very public; and that they imperfectly understood his discourses tho' plain, and without parables. What security can we then have, that they were never deceived? who will answer for the fidelity of their memories, especially in regard to long discourses, so sublime, and full of mysteries, such as those which St. John relates. And who can assure us that all is sincere, and most scrupulously exact, error being sometimes so near truth, that one word more or less may be of infinite consequence? besides the time that past betwixt the events and their history was so considerable, that they possibly by mistake might have omitted, or added several things of importance.

How could we say in such a case, that the gospel being so preached, would have nothing in it of man, when on the contrary, it would have nothing but human on the side of the preachers? why might not their writings have been subject to variation, correction, supplement, &c. these being the characteristics

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of human performances? and how should a just curse have been pronounced against those who pretended to have had a more faithful memory, an exacter attention, or a more enlightened understanding, and grounded their alterations on one of these principles? St. Paul would thus have been the only apostle who had preached an unalterable gospel; nay, this privilege might have been disputed with him, if the gospel had been revealed to him, and the manner of preaching it entrusted to his reason, and natural memory.

It is therefore evident in the first place, that we must judge of the evangelists and the other apostles by St. Paul, because his person is not concerned, but the very foundation of religion, and the immutable certainty of the gospel; and secondly, that we ought to acknowledge in them all an immediate revelation independent of all human means, and a supernatural application of the revealed truths on those occasions wherein they were necessary. This is what Christ had promised in express terms to his apostles, and it would be a visible impiety to doubt of his having accomplished his promise in its full extent. The Comforter, says he, which is "the Holy Ghost, whom my Father will send in my name, will teach you all things; and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." * And in the same discourse, "Howbeit, when his Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth; for he will not speak from him-
I 4 self;

* John xiv. 26.

PART "self; but he will speak all that he has heard:

III. "and he will reveal to you things to come;

"it is he who will glorify me." † Inspiration could not be promised in a more general and express manner; the gift of prophecy is included, but only as a part of the whole. And so true it is, that the Holy Ghost was the internal master of the evangelists and apostles, that it is to him Christ attributes their preaching. "It is he, says he, who will glorify me." And to reascend to the first source of all truth and infallibility, Christ adds, that the Holy Ghost will not speak, but what he has heard; so immutable and divine is the verity of the gospel!

Thus when St. Peter speaks of the epistles of St. Paul, he compares them to the ancient scriptures, whose inspiration was indubitable, and acknowledged by all. "There are," says he, "some places in his epistles difficult to understand, and which fickle and ignorant men pervert to a bad end and abuse, as they do other scriptures, to their own ruin. † And it is the same apostle who gives us a clear and distinct idea of the scriptures, which we ought to look on as divine, by teaching us, that it is the Spirit of God who is the author, and therefore, that it belongs not to the spirit of man to interpret them. "Be persuaded, that no prophecy in the scriptures is to be explained

† John xvi. 13.

† 2 Pet iii. 16.

“ explained by a private interpretation: * for CHAP.
 “ it was not by the will of man that they VII.
 “ formerly were dictated: but it was by the
 “ motion of the Holy Ghost that holy men
 “ of God spoke them.” Thus if we follow
 the light of this apostle, and the testimony
 which he gives to the apostolical writings, we
 ought to be persuaded before all things, that
 the Holy Ghost has dictated them, that hu-
 man will has had no share in them; and that
 it belongs to the church alone, and to no pri-
 vate person, to explain them.

ARTICLE VIII.

Seventh proof. It is essential to the
 true religion to be of divine original:
 it is essential to the scriptures, which
 are its depositaries, to be divine: and
 lastly, essential to its founders to be in-
 spired. Had they not declared them-
 selves such, they would not deserve at-
 tention. Certainly that the scriptures
 of the new testament are not altered.

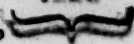
SOME will perhaps object, that I lay too
 great a stress upon what the apostles and
 evangelists say of themselves, and that we
 ought to have some farther proof than their
 bare testimony, to believe them inspired.

I

Οὐ θελήματι ἀνθρώπου ἀλλ' ὑπὸ πνεύματος ἁγίου
 φερόμενοι impulsi ἐλάλησαν. 2 Pet. i. 20.

PART III I agree, that their simple testimony, separate from all that may strengthen its truth, is not sufficient; but I have demonstrated, methinks, that we ought to look on them as sincere; and as uniting in their persons, all the qualities which deserve confidence and respect: thus when they declare themselves inspired, all presumptions are in their favour, and we ought to have very strong reasons to doubt their veracity. We shall see hereafter, that they support by glorious miracles the truth of their discourse, and sublimity of their ministry. But it was not necessary for me to wait for this proof, in order to examine into the reality of their inspiration. This is the natural place of my present enquiry, which would have interrupted the thread of the subject, if it had been deferred. And I am very glad, independently of all that demonstrates it, to have discovered, that the canonical writers of the new testament attribute so manifestly to themselves a divine inspiration. For they would have been suspected by me, had they not claimed it, or had they spoke dubiously; and I should have believed them less, had they been more modest or timid.

It is essential to true religion to be divine: and it is essential by consequence to the scriptures, which preserve its depositum and tradition, to be also divine: these two points necessarily depend on the inspiration of those who first preach the true religion, and establish it by writing. I conclude therefore with certainty,

tainty, that if the christian religion be true, **CHAP.**
the apostles and evangelists, who were the **VII.**
first teachers of it, must have been inspired, 
that they must have known it, and that
they ought to have said so: any other conduct
would have inclined me not to listen to them.
For tho' it be not certain, that he who attri-
butes to himself inspiration, is truly inspired;
it is yet certain, that he who is not inspired,
cannot be the founder of a divine religion.

Whatever therefore will serve to prove the
christian religion, will likewise prove the di-
vinity of the scriptures, which are its
foundation: and their divinity being thus once
established, will not only dispense with us, from
examining whether they have been preserved
pure down to us, but will make us look upon
a simple doubt on this point as a fault, and in-
jurious to divine Providence, which would
have suffered the source of truth to be corrupt-
ed, and thus destroyed the very means it had
chosen of preserving it.

C H A P.

Proofs of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Why we begin by this capital point. We examine the truth of it independently of revelation. The evangelists and apostles who assure us of it, were neither deceivers, nor deceived. Particular proofs which demonstrate, that they could not be deceived. The truth of the christian religion is founded upon facts, which we may be sure of independently of revelation. It is thus we examine whether Christ be truly risen. Why we begin by this cardinal point. None of those facts which are certain and indubitable, have so many proofs of certainty as the resurrection of Christ. Those who assure us, could neither be deceived, nor deceivers. We cannot justly suspect the apostles, nor any of the disciples, of a precipitated credulity: they were of a quite contrary disposition. They at first took no notice of the most express testimonies: they shewed an indifference for proofs, which the most incredulous in our days would have paid a regard to. Indubitable characters of truth in the apparition of Christ to Mary Magdalene; with which the apostles notwithstanding were not moved. A multitude of convincing proofs of the apparition of Christ to his apostles on the day of his resurrection, to which they submit with difficulty. The incredulity of St. Thomas forced to yield to evidence.

ARTICLE I.

The truth of the christian religion is grounded on facts, which we may be certain of, independent of revelation.

It is thus we examine whether Christ be truly risen again. Why we begin by this capital point.

IT is chiefly in relation to the doctrine, whose foundation is divine revelation, that the scriptures ought to be inspired: for as to facts of which there are sensible proofs, they are not in a supernatural order: and we may have an entire certainty when those that relate them are sincere, and sufficiently informed: tho' it be true, that revelation adds a divine certainty when it is joined to the testimony of men.

The christian, as well as jewish religion, is entirely founded on particular facts, whose proofs are external, and depend on the senses. The divine authority afterwards gave them a superior degree of evidence and certainty, by raising those who were the first witnesses to the honour of prophets, and manifesting their sincerity by miracles. But these two degrees of certainty are of a different nature, and may be separated. The first is simple and natural. It neither supposes faith nor revelation; and it is a sufficient qualification to undertake an enquiry thereof, to have good sense and equity.

It

PART
III.

It is thus I have resolved to thoroughly examine the truth of those facts which are essential to the christian religion, and I shall begin with that of the resurrection of Christ, because it is as it were the center of all, and if once established in a solid and clear manner, it becomes the confirmation of all that went before it, and all that follows. I shall return by a circuit to those things which at present I omit, but will then have a greater force. And I hope that after this capital and decisive proof, the others will not only appear less incredible, but reason will anticipate them, and look on them either as preparations, or necessary dependencies.

ARTICLE II.

None of those facts, which are certain and indubitable, have so many marks of certainty as the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The persons, who assure us of it, could neither be deceived, nor deceivers.

WE may affirm, without exaggeration, that amongst all those facts which pass for indubitable, there is no one whose certainty is so well attested as the resurrection of Christ; so proved by a great number of contemporary historians, all ocular witnesses, and ready to lay down their lives to seal with their blood the truth of what they had written, and

who

who in reality most of them died for the testimony of it. But as I am desirous to confirm myself, either against my own weakness, or the incredulity of others, I shall consider how any one might go about to weaken the testimony of the evangelists and apostles; and I see but two ways, I say not of succeeding, but so much as of attempting it.

The first is to say, that the evangelists and apostles were deceived; and the second, that they had a design to deceive others. And yet there would be an extreme injustice to accuse them without foundation. We should bring proofs to destroy proofs. And it belongs to those who oppose their testimony, to produce contrary proofs, or to shew the invalidity of those of the apostles.

But I will content myself with bare suspicion, destitute of proofs; and will not examine with less attention and care, whether it be possible to find in either of those methods, any shadow of probability. As these two extremes are opposite to one another, we must determine to take one of them: for the apostles could not be at the same time actually deceived, and wilful deceivers. I suppose them therefore in the first place suspected of having been deceived.

To suspect them of having been deceived, we must suppose them to have believed they had seen what they had not; or that they used not sufficient care to examine the truth. These two things are connected together: for we never believe we see what we see not, but because

PART III. *cause we want attention in a careful examination. But in this case, we must allow their good intention, and look upon their writings as a consequence of their sincerity.*

ARTICLE III.

We cannot suspect the apostles, nor any of Christ's disciples, of a precipitated credulity. They were of a quite contrary disposition.

LET us now enter into a detail of what the apostles write, and see if we can find any signs of a rash credulity. It appears by their own words, that they had little hope of Christ's resurrection; that the scandal of his cross had banished the little hope they had entertained; and that the prophecy he had made at his departure from Galilee for Jerusalem, was no longer present to their memories.

The holy women who came to the sepulchre, had no other thought but that of embalming afresh the body of Christ, and of paying him their last duties, which they could not perform before on account of the sabbath. But not finding him, they thought him taken away. Mary Magdalene with emotion came to tell it to Peter and John, who running thither, and seeing nothing but the linen and the handkerchief, had much the same idea; for according to the expression of one of them, they were ignorant of the scriptures, and the mysteries

mystery of the resurrection. Magdalene was CHAP.
so full of this thought, that when the two VIII.
angels asked her the reason of her tears, she
answered, "That she wept because they had
"taken away her Lord, and she knew not
"where they had laid him." And a moment
after, seeing Christ without knowing him,
who asked her the same question as the an-
gels, she said, without making reflection on
his words; "If it be you who have taken him
"away, tell me where he is, and I will take
"him away again."

This is what the mind of Magdalene
was full of, when Christ discovered him-
self clearly to her, by calling her by her name,
with the tone of voice with which she had
been acquainted. This is what the other
women thought before the angel undeceived
them, and they had had the happiness of fal-
ling at the feet of Jesus. And this was what
the apostles themselves were obstinate in be-
lieving, in spite of all that Magdalene and the
other women could say.

Were these dispositions a preparation for be-
ing imposed on? did they incline them to
believe without examining? did they fill
the mind and imagination with vain hopes,
which figured to the soul all that flatter'd it,
and gave a vain reality to the lightest appear-
ances? is it not astonishing on the contrary,
that the open sepulchre, the linen re-
maining, and the apparition of the angels,
could not all together recall to Magdalene's
mind the prediction which Christ had made

PART of his resurrection a few days before his death;
 III. in the clearest and most express terms? nay,
 and that the apostles in such circumstances, of
 which they themselves are witnesses, could
 not remember Christ's prediction no more
 than the women?

ARTICLE IV.

They took very little notice in the beginning of the most precise testimonies; they were quite indifferent in respect to proofs, which the most incredulous in our days, would look upon as worthy of attention.

FROM this first observation let us proceed to another, and see what impression was made upon the apostles, * and other disciples, by a relation so well circumstanced of what Mary Magdalene in particular, and the other women separately, had seen; and by the discourses of the angels, and those which they said they had with Christ himself. They looked upon all this as a meer revery, † as empty imaginations, and fanciful chimeras, and disregarded them as such. And why? was it because that these things did not sufficiently

* "And told all these things to the eleven, and to all the rest." Luke xxiv. 9.

† "And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not." *ibid.* v. 11.

ciently interest them? they who were incon-CHAP.
solable § for the death of their master, who VIII.
might reasonably hope for the greatest advantages if he was truly risen again, and who were deceived in all, if his resurrection was not real? the women who bore testimony of this, could not reasonably be thought unworthy of credit, they who had quitted all for Christ, who had followed him even to the cross, when all the rest had deserted him, and who had had the courage to go to the sepulchre, even when they thought that the guards were there still. † Mary the mother of James, and of the two other apostles, was amongst them. Joanna, wife of Herod's steward, and Magdalene, must have deserved a particular regard. What they said to have seen and heard, had not the air of fiction, for it was naturally impossible to feign such a relation. And nothing could have been more unreasonable, than not to examine into it.

Nevertheless they all despised this as vain and frivolous: and that very day two disciples, one of whom was called Cleophas, † separated themselves from the rest, probably to return to their former profession, having no farther hopes; tho' they still preserved a friendly ve-

K 2

neration

§ " And she went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept. Mark xvi. 10.

† " It was Mary Magdalene and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the apostles. Luke xxiv. 10.

† The same in all probability, as had married Mary, whom the scripture calls the sister of the blessed Virgin, and who was father of three apostles, James, Jude, and Simon the lesser, or Simon who was bishop of Jerusalem after St. James.

PART. neration for Jesus, when he joined them in

III. the way, but without making himself known
 to them, and obliged them by his questions to
 discover their thoughts. It is of the highest
 importance for us to inform ourselves of the
 whole, and suppress nothing, " Concerning
 " † Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet
 " mighty in deed and word before God, and
 " all the people. And how the chief priests
 " and our rulers delivered him to be con-
 " demned to death, and have crucified him.
 " But we trusted, that it had been he which
 " should have redeemed Israel: and beside all
 " this, to-day is the third day since these things
 " were done. Yea, and certain women also
 " of our company made us astonished, which
 " were early at the sepulchre, and when they
 " found not his body, they came saying, that
 " they had also seen a vision of angels, which
 " said, that he was alive. And certain of them
 " which were with us, went to the sepulchre,
 " and found it even as the women had said,
 " but him they saw not."

When we connect all that the disciples men-
 tion in this narration, we cannot help being
 seized with a kind of impatience against them,
 because they draw not any one consequence
 from the clearest facts, nor from those which
 themselves could so easily prove. It is as
 yet but the third day, early in the morning
 the sepulchre is open, and the linens only are
 left. Women, whose virtue and sincerity can-
 not be suspected, say, they have seen angels,
 who

† Luke xxiv.

who declared to them the resurrection of CHAP. VIII.
Christ, which he himself had foretold. They
respect him as a great prophet, yet neither be-
lieve him, nor the angels, nor the persons to
whom the angels have spoken. Is it possible
to carry indolence and incredulity further? Can
we suppose those who are so unfortunate as to
doubt in our times of the resurrection of
Christ, capable of so great a lethargy of mind,
were they in the same circumstances of con-
viction? And would they not have been more
sollicitous, and taken more care to search into
a truth of so great a consequence?

Let them therefore suppose for a moment,
they are present themselves at the account these
holy women give of what they have seen, and
judge if they would have set such a flight by
it as the apostles. “ * As we were affrighted,
say the women, because according to our
thought they had taken away the body of
Jesus, “ two angels cloathed in white ap-
“ peared to us, who sat in the very place
“ where his body had been, one at the head,
“ and the other at the feet; who said to us,
“ Why seek ye among the dead him that is
“ living? he is not here, he is risen. Re-
“ member in what manner he spake to you,
“ whilst he was still in Galilee. It is necessary,
“ said he, that the Son of man should be de-
“ livered into the hands of sinners, be cruci-
“ fied, and rise again on the third day: and
“ in fact, we did remember it. † And the
K 3 “ angels

* John xx. 12. Luke xxiv. 4, & 5. † Math. xxviii. 6.

PART “angels added; Come, and see the place
 III. “where the Lord was laid: * haste then, tell
 { “his disciples and Peter, that he is risen, and
 “will be in Galilee before you, where you
 “will see him. We immediately went out of
 “the sepulchre to tell you this with joy. †
 “But as we were in the way, our Lord him-
 “self met us, and said, All hail. We drew
 “near him, and falling at his feet worshipped
 “him.”

What must they who hear this narration think of it? a narration so wise, so serious, and so vastly moving. Is there any air of folly and revery here? how do the women remember on a sudden, that Christ had foretold his crucifixion and resurrection, they who only sought for some consolation after his death, by perfuming his body with sweet odours? how could they so quickly pass from the deepest sorrow, to the most lively sentiment of joy? how could they guess, that the Lord would make himself visible to his disciples in Galilee, if the angels had said nothing of this nature to them? I am persuaded, that even those whose faith is wavering, would have found here worthy subjects of reflection; and I hope they will never more accuse the apostles of too hasty a credulity.

* Mark xvi. 7.

† Matt. xxviii. 1. 9.

ARTICLE V.

Indisputable characters of truth in the apparition of Christ to Mary Magdalene, with which notwithstanding the apostles were not moved.

BUT let them listen to what Magdalene has to say to them. “ The vision of
“ the angels, and their words so capable of
“ inspiring comfort, could not dry up my tears.
“ I wept still, when I saw Jesus before me,
“ without knowing who he was : he says to
“ me : * Woman why weepest thou ? and I
“ answered him, believing him the gardener,
“ Sir, if it is you who have taken him away,
“ tell me where you have laid him, and I will
“ remove him. After this I was ready to re-
“ turn ; but Jesus called me by my name,
“ Mary ! when knowing him by his voice, I
“ turned suddenly and said to him, Ah, my
“ master ! I wanted then to throw myself at
“ his feet and embrace them : but he said to
“ me, Touch me not ; I am not yet ascended
“ to my Father. But go to my brethren, and
“ tell them : I ascend unto my Father, and your
“ Father : to my God, and your God.”

Can any of these circumstances be the effect of an imagination that figures to itself what it hopes, and converts its visions into supposed realities. Magdalene weeps, and while she is

K 4

quite

* John xx. 14.

PART quite plunged in sorrow, she hears herself
III. named, in a tone which bears with it persuasion, and causes the most lively sentiments of joy. But her joy is suspended by a kind of prohibition, the reason of which is still obscure, and which certainly was no ways natural for her to conjecture. And it is still less probable she should put into the mouth of Christ, such terms as he had not yet made use of: "Go and say to my brethren (a new expression, but foretold in Psalm xxi.) "that I ascend to my Father, and your Father;—to my God, and your God." An expression still newer, and less heard of, but which fully shews the entire reconciliation of God with man, by the merits of a divine mediator, who unites in the same person the Son of God and man.

The apostles who were not moved with so many things capable of persuading, or at least of inspiring them with an earnest desire of satisfying their curiosity, are a prodigy of incredulity and insensibility. And there never was a suspicion worse grounded, and more contrary to their dispositions, than that of an excessive facility in believing without examination.

ARTICLE

ARTICLE VI.

Convincing proofs multiplied in the apparition of Christ to his apostles on the day of his resurrection, which they did not submit to but with a kind of reluctance.

WE shall still be more convinced, when we consider with what difficulty they submitted to the most evident testimonies, and indubitable proofs. But those who still doubt, ought to transport themselves in spirit to the place where they shut themselves up for fear of the Jews, and there render themselves spectators of what passed.

The news of the resurrection of Christ † began to be regarded as true, and found entrance into the minds of some after he had appeared to Peter; when the two disciples, who had discoursed with him in the way to Emmaus, and who had known him in the breaking of bread, came to tell the eleven apostles, and the others who were with them, what had happened to them. Christ chose the very time they were speaking, to shew himself to them, wishing them peace, and exhorting them to good hopes. “ But they “ were terrified and affrighted, and supposed “ that they had seen a spirit. And he said “ unto

† “ Saying the Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared unto “ Simon. Luke xxiv. 34.

PART “ unto them, Why are you troubled? and
 III. “ why do thoughts arise in your hearts?
 “ behold my hands, and my feet, that it is
 “ I myself. Handle me and see, for a spirit
 “ hath not flesh and bones, as you see me
 “ have. And when he had thus spoken, he
 “ shewed them his hands and feet, (where the
 “ openings made by the nails still appeared.)
 “ And while they yet believed not for joy,
 “ and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye
 “ here any meat? And they gave him a piece
 “ of a broiled fish, and an honey-comb. And
 “ he took it, and did eat before them. And he
 “ said unto them, These are the words which
 “ I spake unto you, while I was yet with you:
 “ that all things must be fulfilled which were
 “ written in the law of Moses, and in the pro-
 “ phets, and in the psalms, concerning me.”

I interrupt the rest of the discourse, to ask of those whom I have desired to consider themselves as spectators, if they are contented, or would desire any thing further? is it possible to unite together more proofs, or of a nature less capable of elusion? who would even have thought, that Christ after his resurrection, had still preserved the marks of his crucifixion, that he would have condescended to eat, and suffered himself to be touched. Yet the apostles had need of all this to convince themselves, that they were not deceived by the apparition of a spirit; and scarce could they trust their eyes, ears, and hands, so afraid were they of giving themselves up to a false joy, and so inclined

inclined were they to diffidence, and to all the CHAP.
suspicious capable of maintaining it. VIII.

But let us listen to the rest, and see how
Christ compleated their conviction. He
had just told them, that his death and resur-
rection were foretold in the scriptures: but
this would have been to no purpose, had he
not opened their minds to give them the right
understanding of them. * He therefore com-
municated to them the same Spirit which had
dictated the scriptures, and continued thus: †
“ It is written, and thus it behoveth Christ to
“ suffer, and to rise from the dead the third
“ day. And that repentance and remission of
“ sins should be preached in his name among
“ all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And
“ ye are witnesses of these things. And be-
“ hold I send the promise of my Father
“ upon you. But tarry in the city of Jeru-
“ salem until ye be endued with power from
“ on high.”

As I suppose I speak here to serious, sincere
minds, I ask whether each word which I
have here related, is not a new proof, that
the apparition was real? who is it that dis-
covers to the apostles the mysteries of scrip-
ture? who is it that gives them the commission
of preaching repentance and remission of sins
to all people? who is it that promises them
supernatural strength, to maintain with dignity
so high a ministry? who is it that forbids them

to
“ Then opened he their understanding, that they might un-
“ derstand the scriptures. Luke xxiv. 45.

† Luke 46, &c.

PART to obtrude themselves before they had received
 III. it? and who is it that commands them to be-
 gin their functions at Jerusalem, where their
 master had been crucified, and where there
 was no appearance that his disciples should
 have any success?

A R T I C L E VII.

*The incredulity of St. Thomas is forced
 to yield to evidence.*

I Am sure we cannot look upon all these cir-
 cumstances as true, and retain the least
 doubt concerning the truth of the resurrection
 of Christ. St. Thomas notwithstanding, who
 though absent, was instructed of all by
 the other disciples, continued to deny it, †
 without yielding to any thing but evidence, and
 his own experience of what they told him:
 adding, that he wanted to put himself his finger
 into his wounds, and his hand into his side,
 which the rest were contented with having
 seen. Here is a man far removed from an in-
 discreet credulity, and lively representing the
 disposition of those who can believe nothing
 but what they have seen, and are always dis-
 fident of the exactness and care of others. How
 was he then persuaded? “Eight days after,
 “the disciples being within, and Thomas with
 “them, Jesus came to them, whilst the doors
 “were shut. He appeared in the midst of
 “them,

† John xx. 24, &c.

“ them, and said, Peace be with you. He CHAP.
“ said to Thomas, Stretch out thy finger, and VIII.
“ see my hands; and hold forth thy hand, and
“ thrust it into my side; and be not unfaithful,
“ but faithful. Thomas answered him, saying,
“ My Lord! and my God! And Jesus an-
“ swered, Thou hast believed because thou hast
“ seen: happy those, who shall believe, tho’
“ they have not seen.”

Is it possible, that the incredulity of St. Thomas should have held out against such strong and palpable evidence? Had he continued in his obstinacy, would it not have been most unjust and unreasonable? And they whose faith is at this day wavering, could they forbear crying out with him, had they been in his place, Thou art my Lord! and my God! The resurrection of Christ was therefore fully evident, and it would have been folly to have doubted of it. In such circumstances, the most obstinate incredulity must have been overcome. How could that very resurrection become afterwards doubtful? and how can incredulity, which then would have been absolutely contrary to right sense and reason, how can it, I say, expect the least excuse?

Who could relate the words of St. Thomas to a phantom, to a mere chimera? how could a phantom know in what consisted the diffidence of this disciple, and what could remove it? by what illusion did the flesh of Christ appear as real as the hand of St. Thomas that touched it? by what other means can the truth and reality of bodies be proved, if all the demonstrations we have here be suspected?
in

PART in fine, from whose mouth came that salutary
 III. truth, so comfortable to those who have be-
 ~~~~~ lieved the testimony of the apostles: "Thou  
 "hast believed, Thomas, because thou hast  
 "seen; but happy those who believe without  
 "seeing."

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## C H A P. IX.

*Wherein we continue to examine, whether it was possible the apostles should have been deceived in respect to the resurrection of Christ. With what slowness the two disciples, who went to Emmaus, yielded to the proofs of his resurrection: the examination and strength of these proofs; and yet they made but a slight impression on the apostles. The order which was given them to go and wait for Christ in Galilee, could not be the effect of illusion, and the event admits no doubt. Reasons for this order, which become new proofs. The multitude of spectators: the impossibility of their being all deceived. The apparition of Christ upon the shore of the lake of Tiberias, furnished many proofs which could not be subject to illusion. The relation of the two miraculous captures of fishes: equal certainty of both. What followed this apparition, and is peculiar to St. Peter, is a fruitful source of new proofs, as herein the imagination and illusion could have no part. Collection of the proofs from apparitions and instructions of Christ during forty days.*

## ARTICLE

ARTICLE I.

*With what slowness the two disciples, who went to Emmaus, yielded to the proofs of his resurrection. Examination and force of these proofs. And yet they made but a slight impression on the apostles.*

WE have said in the preceding chapters, that two disciples being informed of what the holy women had seen and related, had been so little moved with it that they separated from the rest, quite disconsolate for the loss of Christ, and having no longer any hope of seeing him again: and we have proved by their example how little the apostles, and other disciples, expected his resurrection, and how far they were from surrendering themselves hastily to the first reports, or equivocal signs.

These two disciples changed their sentiments the same day †. And we shall now examine whether this change was made upon motives subject to illusion, and whose weakness would have been perceived by more diligent and attentive inquirers. They were going to Emmaus, and in the way they were discoursing together with grief about what had happened to their dear master, whom they had looked upon as designed to be the deliverer of Israel, but whose death had defeated all their hopes.

“ And

† Luke xxiv. 13, &c.

PART

III.

“ And it came to pass, that while they communed together, and reasoned, himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were holden that they should not know him. And he said to them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk and are sad? And one of them, whose name was Cleophas, answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet.” I omit the remainder of their answer, which has been mentioned already †. And before I relate the answer given by Christ, I ask whether such an apparition can be suspected of falshood. The disciples did not expect this, and far from imagining Christ to be risen again, they perceived him not, tho’ discoursing and walking with him: they heard him even speak without knowing him: and in a long discourse, wherein he explains all the connection of scripture, it never came into their heads that it was he, tho’ he reproaches them with their slowness of belief, with an authority and mildness which no one else could have imitated; and tho’ he unfolds mysteries to them, of which he alone could have so sublime and perfect a knowledge.

“ O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken, ought not  
“ Christ

† In the foregoing chap. art. 4.



“ Christ to have suffered those things, and to CHAP.  
“ have entered into his glory? And beginning IX.  
“ at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded  
“ unto them, in all the scriptures, the things  
“ concerning himself.”

I require not here a spirit of wisdom and equity, to have a just sense of this proof. I consent on the contrary, that we resist so clear a light, as long as we can find any pretext for refusing our acquiescence. How could men, who had not perhaps read the prophets, or never understood the mysteries of the death and resurrection of Christ, imagine they heard a skilful interpreter who explains them in order? By what sudden illusion do they see all the connection of the scriptures, the precise passages, the natural figures, the distinct predictions, which had a reference to the sufferings and humiliations of the Messiah, and to the glory of his resurrection? Who quotes to them so appositely Moses and the prophets, in whose writings there are so many who find a difficulty at this day to discover Jesus Christ? 'Tis no longer the hand of an apostle that touches real flesh: 'tis no longer the ear alone that hears the words: 'tis no longer the eye that attests the truth and presence of a raised body. There is besides this, a learned interpretation of the sublimest prophecies, a light which clears up every obscurity of the scriptures, a holy ardour which inflames and comforts the hearts of the disciples, as they acknowledged, after the veil which covered them was taken from their eyes. Here all

PART possible proofs concur together; the conviction  
 III. of the senses, and reason, with a prophetic  
 light. All add to each other a new strength;  
 and the last, which is incapable of illusion,  
 gives to the rest an evidence and certainty  
 which no human efforts can invalidate.

The disciples notwithstanding, still slow of  
 believing, even to excess, tho' very much  
 moved, knew not Christ till after they had  
 obliged him to stay with them, and being at  
 table with him, they observed by the manner  
 in which he blessed the bread before he brake  
 it, a perfect similitude with what he always  
 practised while on earth. "And their eyes  
 "were opened, and they knew him; and they  
 "said to each other, Did not our heart burn  
 "within us, while he talked with us by the  
 "way, and while he opened to us the scrip-  
 "tures? And they rose up the same hour, and  
 "returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven  
 "gathered together, and they told what things  
 "had been done in the way, and how he  
 "was known of them in breaking of bread."  
 There never was certainly a testimony more  
 worthy of credit; nor was there ever any case,  
 wherein the suspicion of illusion, or precipita-  
 tion of judgment, could be with less probability  
 supposed. And yet one † of the evangelists ob-  
 serves, that they were not believed. The ge-  
 neral

And after that, he appeared in another form unto two  
 "of them, as they walked, and went into the country.

"And they went and told it unto the residue; neither believ-  
 "ed they them. Mark xiv. 12, 13.

neral and prevailing disposition at that time **CHAP. IX.**  
was, not to believe what was even most indu-  
bitable and certain.

## ARTICLE II.

*The order which was given them to go into Galilee, and there wait for Christ, could not be subject to illusion, and the event could not be doubtful.*

*Reasons of this order, which become new proofs. Multitude of spectators. Impossibility that they should have been all deceived.*

**W**E have seen already † that the angels which appeared to the holy women, charged them to tell the apostles, not only that Christ was risen again, but that he would be before them in Galilee, and that they should see him there. Christ himself renewed the order to them when they saw him, and fell at his feet. And this order was not general and indetermined; for Christ marked to them distinctly the mountain \* where he had resolved to shew himself to his disciples; and there is a great deal of probability that he mentioned to them likewise the time, tho' it be not expressed in scripture.

**L 2** **Such**

† Matt. xxviii. 7. Mark xvi. 7. Matt. xxviii. 10.

\* " Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain, where Jesus had appointed them. Matt. xxviii. 16.



PART

III.

Such an order and meeting have something very singular in them, that does not easily occur to ones mind. But if there neither was in all this any reality, nor the angels or Christ said any thing of this nature, the apostles, deceived by a false order and hope, took an useless trouble in going to Galilee. They waited likewise in vain for the accomplishment of a chimerical promise. Neither they, nor the other persons who were entrusted with the secret, saw Christ. They must therefore have been entirely convinced that the first apparitions made to the women were illusions. They must have been distrustful of what they themselves thought they had seen. And as they were returned to their country and families, there they must have remained, and for ever lost the vain idea of I know not what kingdom and liberty, with which they had flattered themselves during the life of Christ, and which these pretended visions had revived in them after his death. All this necessarily follows from the supposition that the angels and Christ spoke not to the apostles. But as quite the contrary happened; and the apostles and other disciples saw what they hoped for; as they returned from Galilee more persuaded than ever they were of the resurrection of Christ before they had gone thither; and as in this journey the number of the faithful who were convinced was greatly augmented; all these circumstances prove beyond contradiction, that the order given by the angels and Christ was

was real, and that the apparitions wherein it CHAP.  
was given were indubitably true. IX.

But why did Christ, who had so clearly shewed himself to the apostles and some disciples in the house where they were assembled at Jerusalem, send them as far as Galilee? We have reason to conjecture, it was to procure them more liberty at a distance from the council of the priests and elders, more facility in assembling, and easier means of reuniting the ancient disciples. But the chief reason without doubt was to confirm them in the belief that he was really risen, by reviewing again with them the places from whence he had called them, and where he had preached, and wrought so many miracles; by uniting the progress of the gospel with its beginnings, the effects with the predictions, and the glory with contradictions and humiliations; by observing to them, that in such a place he had foretold them what had happened; and in such another he had reproved them for having only carnal views, and comprehending nothing in the mystery of his sufferings and death.

All this was admirably designed to strengthen them more and more; and to give them, as it were, a palpable and sensible proof of the resurrection of him who lived and conversed with them according to his former goodness; who taught them the same truths, foretold the same comfortable things, promised them the same glorious rewards, and who in all things appeared perfectly the same with him whom they had followed in the desert, upon the

mountains, and especially upon that where the general meeting was appointed them, and perhaps was where he had spoke his discourse of the christian beatitudes, which contains all christian perfection in the highest degree.

But as wonderful and divine as this is, supposing the whole to be true, so insipid is it and contemptible, on a supposition of its being chimerical. What is it that the apostles go to seek in Galilee, and what is it they find? by what unaccountable phrenzy do they all imagine the same identical visions? how happens it that no one amongst them, wiser than the rest, acknowledges that he sees nothing at all? why should all the disciples be thus called to the summit of a mountain, where it was harder to deceive them, and still more difficult to represent to them Christ addressing himself to them with those words of grace and life, with that majesty and inimitable sweetness which were peculiar to his character? what phantom or chimerica took his place? and how could so great a number of spectators, who were so well acquainted with the person of Christ, suffer themselves to be so grossly imposed on by illusion and deceit? I say a *great number of spectators*\*, because St. Paul assures us, that Christ after his resurrection shewed himself at one time to upwards of five hundred brethren at once,

\* "After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once: of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep." 1 Cor. xv. 6.



once, that is, to more than five hundred disciples; which could not be but in Galilee. St. Paul, who was not at that time of that number, and who became a short time after a violent persecutor of the disciples of Christ, cannot be a suspicious witness. Besides he quotes his vouchers, many of whom were living when he wrote his first epistle to the Corinthians.

Let the most distrustful and incredulous present themselves, and let them accuse; if they dare, this great number of ocular witnesses, of having seen nothing but a chimera, and having taken a shadow, a revery, an illusion, for Jesus Christ. Do they reflect that all these witnesses knew Christ perfectly well, that they had often conversed with him, and had followed him for several years. For their apprehension of the Jews suffered them not to let others into the secret, or repose a confidence in them. It was therefore a select part of the most faithful and zealous, that composed this multitude, who were in every respect less liable to mistake, and with whom it was not possible to substitute fiction and falshood in the stead of truth.

But were we even to suppose that they had less knowledge and discernment, yet how could they have been all deceived in the like manner? how could it happen, that some less visionary than the rest did not perceive the fraud? what was this appearance that deceived them? in what did it consist? and what was the cause of it? if it be reasonable, upon suspicions so contrary to reason and all probability, to reject as fabulous the testimony of five

PART hundred ocular witnesses, we must no longer  
 III. expect any certainty; and no longer reason  
 either on religion or any other subject or  
 duty.

### ARTICLE III.

*The apparition of Christ upon the bank  
 of the lake of Tiberias, furnishes us  
 with several proofs, that are not sub-  
 ject to illusion. The relation which  
 the two captures of fishes have to  
 each other. Equal certainty of both.*

**I**T was when the apostles were in Gali-  
 lee, that Christ manifested himself in a  
 more particular and mysterious manner to  
 some of them. The history is in St. John,  
 and I can do nothing better than relate it in  
 his own terms\*.

There were together Simon Peter, and  
 Thomas called Didymus, Nathaniel of Ca-  
 na in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee,  
 (James and John) and two other of his dis-  
 ciples. Simon Peter said unto them: I go  
 a fishing: they say unto him, We also go  
 with thee. They went forth and entered  
 into a ship immediately; but that night they  
 caught nothing. But when the morning  
 was now come, Jesus stood on the shore.  
 But the disciples knew not that it was Jesus.  
 Then

\* John xxi. 2. and following.

“ Then Jesus said unto them: Children, have CHAP.  
“ ye any meat? They answered him, No. And IX.  
“ he said unto them, Cast the net on the right  
“ side of the ship, and ye shall find. They  
“ cast therefore, and now they were not able  
“ to draw it for the multitude of fishes.  
“ Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved,  
“ said unto Peter: It is the Lord. Now when  
“ Simon Peter heard it was the Lord, he girt  
“ his fisher’s coat unto him, (for he was naked)  
“ and did cast himself into the sea. And  
“ the other disciples came in a little ship:  
“ for they were not far from land, but as it  
“ were two hundred cubits, dragging the net  
“ with fishes. As soon then as they were  
“ come to land, they saw a fire of coals there,  
“ and fish laid thereon and bread. Jesus said  
“ unto them, Bring of the fishes which you  
“ have now caught. Simon Peter went up  
“ and drew the net to land full of great fishes,  
“ an hundred and fifty and three: and for all  
“ there were so many, yet was not the net  
“ broken. Jesus said unto them, Come, and  
“ dine. And none of the disciples durst ask  
“ him, Who art thou? knowing that it was  
“ the Lord. Jesus then cometh, and taketh  
“ bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise.”

What the evangelist adds, renders the apparition of Christ still more indubitable; that is, determines still in a more precise and clear manner, that it was he who was present: and we shall see it in the sequel. But contenting ourselves with the recital we have heard, what a multiplicity of proofs do we not



**PART** not find, that all was real, and that there was  
**III.** an impossibility of being deceived? their fishing is real; the capture of fishes is real; the coals lighted, the fishes, the bread, and the repast, are all real. How could there then be here any deception? and how could seven apostles, who had fished all the night without taking any thing, who at the word of Christ cast their net on a certain side of the ship, and took at one draught one hundred and fifty-three great fishes, who drag with pains the net thus loaded to land, who chuse out some of the fishes to eat, and really eat of them; how can, I say, these apostles doubt of the truth of all that passes?

But this is only a part of the proof, and there is another which very much strengthens it, and must be here explained, in order to set it in its full light. It had been after a miraculous fishing on the same sea of Galilee, that Peter and Andrew, his brother James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, left their boats and nets to join themselves inseparably to Christ, who had promised to make them for the future fishers of men. St. Luke relates it in these words: † “And he entered into one of the ships which was Simon’s, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people out of the ship. Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. And Simon answered and said

† Luke v. 3. &c.

“ said unto him, Master, we have toiled all CHAP.  
“ the night, and have taken nothing: never- IX.  
“ theless, at thy word I will let down the  
“ net. And when they had this done, they  
“ enclosed a great multitude of fishes, and  
“ their net brake. And they beckoned unto  
“ their partners which were in the other ship,  
“ that they should come and help them. And  
“ they came and filled both the ships, so that  
“ they began to sink. When Simon Peter  
“ saw it, he fell down at Jesus’s knees, say-  
“ ing, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man,  
“ O Lord. For he was astonished, and all  
“ that were with him, at the draught of the  
“ fishes which they had taken. And so was  
“ also James and John, the sons of Zebedee,  
“ which were partners with Simon. And  
“ Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not, hencefor-  
“ ward thou shalt catch men. And when  
“ they had brought their ships to land, they  
“ forsook all, and followed him.”

It was to recall the remembrance of this first miraculous draught of fishes, and of their vocation to the apostleship, that Christ brings his disciples into Galilee, and by his providence, places Peter and the sons of Zebedee in a boat on the same lake, and after a like useless labour during a whole night, he makes them let down the net a second time at his word, and they catch an incredible multitude of fishes: but with these different circumstances, that they are all choice fishes, that their number is certain and marked, that the net is not broken, and that they are all found on the right side,

PART to signify the elect. Whereas the first draught  
 III. was the figure of the faithful, who were to  
 enter into the church, many of whom endanger it by their vicious manners, and some divide it by heresies and schisms.

How strongly must these events, on one side so wonderful, and on the other so alike and full of relations, impress on the minds of the apostles, not only a perfect persuasion that Christ was risen, and preserved for them the same affection; but that he predestined them for the same glory of drawing mankind out of that abyss into which they were plunged; that his death had changed nothing in regard of his designs toward them; and that neither their weakness nor incredulity had been able to shake his promises grounded upon a free and gracious, and consequently immutable goodness.

By causing them to find lighted coals, fishes, and bread, on the shore, he put them in mind of the miraculous multiplications of some fishes and loaves in the desert, of which they themselves were the dispensers; and he taught them at the same time, that without him all their labour would be in vain; that their success depended on his word; and that as for him, when he pleased to do without their ministry, he could order bread and fishes, which they should have no share in procuring.

## ARTICLE



ARTICLE IV.

*What followed this apparition, and is particular to St. Peter, is a fruitful source of new proofs, wherein deception and illusion have no share.*

**B**UT let us see in St. John, \* the other circumstances of this apparition, which we suppressed, that we might not crowd the mind with too many things at once, but leave it at full liberty to meditate on them at leisure.  
“ So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter: Simon Peter, Simon son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? he saith unto him, Yea Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith unto him again the second time: Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? he saith unto him, Yea Lord, thou knowest that I love thee: he saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He said unto him the third time: Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved, because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? and he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, when thou wast young thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest, but when thou shalt

\* Chap.-xxi. 15.

PART " shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy

III. " hands, and another shall gird thee, and  
 " carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This  
 " spake he, signifying by what death he  
 " should glorify God. And when he had  
 " spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.  
 " Then Peter turning about, seeth the disci-  
 " ple whom Jesus loved following, which  
 " also leaned on his breast at supper, and said,  
 " Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee?  
 " Peter seeing him, said to Jesus, Lord, what  
 " shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If  
 " I will that he tarry till I come, what is that  
 " to thee? follow thou me? Then went this  
 " saying abroad among the brethren, that that  
 " disciple should not die. Yet Jesus said not  
 " unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will  
 " that he tarry till I come, what is that to  
 " thee?"

'Tis no longer necessary to observe, that in all this history, there is nothing that imagination could feign; for the whole is not only plain and natural, but of such a nature, that no one could have formed to himself an idea thereof without seeing it. The three answers of Peter are essentially relative to three real questions. The prediction of his martyrdom, in an advanced age, and of the kind of martyrdom which was strictly accomplished, is a demonstration that cannot be darkened. The prediction that John should die a natural death, which was likewise accomplished, is a new proof. And the interpretation which several gave of it, as if he was not to die, shews

the

the truth of the history, tho' they mistook the intent of the prophecy. CHAPL  
IX

But this is the least part of our reflections: and the proofs of the resurrection of Christ will become without comparison more efficacious and perswasive, if we sift it to the bottom. St. Peter had thought, before the experience of his weakness had undeceived him, that he was incapable of deserting Christ, and that he should continue faithful to his master, tho' all the rest should abandon him: "Tho' I all men shall be offended because of thee, yet I will I never be offended." He was therefore entirely perswaded, that he loved him more than all the rest. And as he had but a few moments before cast himself into the sea, to hasten towards him, whilst the other disciples came in the boat, it might have been apprehended that he still flattered himself with having a readier and more intense love. Hence it is that Christ questions him thus the first time, "Simon, lovest thou me more than these?" This comparison being to him a lesson, that was proper to recall into his mind the rashness he had had of preferring himself to others, and making himself judge of a secret known to God alone. Wherefore the apostle contents himself with saying: "Thou knowest, Lord, that I love thee." And he avoids the second question, which makes him remember his former presumption, and greatly humbles him in his own eyes.



## PART

## III.

St. Peter, besides having given to himself an unjust preference, had three times denied his master before a servant, by a fear extremely opposite to love. And it was to make him repair these three denials which fear had drawn from him in the presence of a slave, that Christ, author of liberty, had made him renew three different times the sincere protestation of his love.

This apostle had dared to contradict Christ himself, who foretold his future fall, and admonished him of his weakness. And to make him expiate that proud confidence, he intimidates him by reiterated questions, which inform him, that he may still have but an imperfect knowledge of himself, and answer rashly for his heart, and the love that possesses it.

Hence St. Peter grew sad at the third question, and added to his first answer these words: "Lord! thou knowest all things."

Christ had said to him in express terms, \* "Thou canst not follow me now, but thou shalt follow me afterwards" And Peter had answered him: "Lord! why can I not follow you at present? I will give my life for you: I am ready to go with thee both into prison and to death." † He was mistaken, and he deserved to be for ever abandoned to his own presumption. But Christ, exact in his predictions, lets him know that he shall follow him to death, after having humbled him with the conviction that he had not the courage to bear

\* John xiii. 36.

† Luke xxii. 33.

bear him company; and he signified to him CHAP.  
clearly enough, † that he should have the ho- IX.  
nour to die on a cross, like himself.

In fine, this apostle who had employed the credit of St. John to know from Christ who was the person that would betray him, wants in his turn to employ his own, to learn from the Son of God, what was to be the lot of this disciple. And his curiosity is repressed by the salutary advice of minding his own duty.

All these circumstances have such a visible and necessary connection one with another, that it is impossible not to see, that he who speaks to Peter after his resurrection, is the same as he who advertised him of his weakness, who had foretold his three denials, and had promised to raise him up after his fall; and that it is resisting the clearest light, to seek for vain phantoms in our imagination, in order to invalidate such strong evidence.

## ARTICLE V.

*A collection of proofs in the apparitions and instructions of Christ, during forty days.*

**W**HAT compleats the strength of all those proofs which we have related, is what St. Luke says, || “ That Christ shew’d  
VOL. II. M “ himself

† “ But thou shalt follow me afterwards.”

|| Acts i. 3.

PART

III.

“himself alive after his passion, by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.” For in these few words, he has assembled proofs without number, which were multiplied, diversified, and inculcated during forty days; all containing something new, and adding further strength to the former; all connecting and corroborating each other; and ending not in simple apparitions, or in barren proofs that Christ was risen again; but full of instructions in relation to the church, the sacraments, the hierarchy, and public discipline, all which is comprehended under the name of the kingdom of God. And they served likewise to strengthen the apostles in the faith of those salutary truths, of which they were to be the preachers, and as such they ought perfectly to know the several proofs drawn from scripture, with all their references, dependences, and consequences.

How is it possible to invalidate this chain of demonstrations, formed by a conversation continued for forty days, by instructions upon subjects entirely new, by the clearing up of mysteries hid in the scriptures, by the manifestation of the general plan of the church, which was to begin at Jerusalem, without openly separating from the synagogue; to unite afterwards in its bosom all nations; and in spite of heresies and persecutions, to remain invincible to the end of ages.

For



For it is of importance to observe, that CHAP. IX.  
Christ had not explained himself fully upon all these points before his death: that many of them were even absolutely unknown; and that it became his wisdom and goodness to instruct the apostles in each particular, in order to prevent divisions and doubts, and to prepare them by his lessons for grace, and the virtue of the Holy Ghost, who was to teach them afterwards, how to put his doctrine in practice.

Let us now examine, not whether it be probable, that the apostles were deceived; for 'tis a folly to think it: but how great is the misfortune of those who upon a frivolous suspicion, and so contrary to clear evidence, stagger in their faith; or even become incredulous, without ever having seriously read the scriptures, without having compared them with themselves, and without having entered into a detail, as I have done, to spare them the pains: persuaded as I am, that they would probably never be at the trouble, but that they would always distrust reasonings, that were not rendered sensible and convincing by the exact knowledge of essential facts, and the consequences naturally thereon depending.

## C H A P. X.

*Wherein the notion of those is examined, who would have had Christ to have shewn himself to others besides his disciples after his resurrection. His conduct herein is justified. The seeming reasons which incline some to wish, that the proofs of the resurrection of Christ had been public. A general answer. A more particular answer, demonstrating, that all those public proofs would at last have terminated in a history, which at the most could but have been equally authoris'd with that which has been written by the evangelists, and attested by the apostles. Answer to all opposite reasons.*

**I** Suppose the suspicion of the apostles being deceived, to be fully destroyed; and that those who did not think it so remote from probability, are at present as much convinced as I am, that it is no less contrary to reason than faith. But there remains commonly in the heart of those, who have entertained doubts on the resurrection of Christ, a certain difficulty, which it is of consequence to remove.

## ARTICLE

ARTICLE I.

*Seeming reasons, which incline some persons to desire that the proofs of the resurrection of Christ had been public. A general answer.*

WE agree, say they, that the resurrection of Christ is certain, and that the apostles had convincing proofs of it: but why was it only evidenced to the apostles? why was it to the rest a mystery and a secret? the scandal of the cross had been public; was it not necessary that the resurrection, which was to be the remedy, should likewise be public? what labours and pains would have been spared the apostles, if every one had been witnesses of it? what could the priests, and other enemies of Christ have answered, had he convinced them by his presence, that he was risen again? what blindness of the Jews could have resisted such an evidence? and how much would all disputes have been abridged, and all doubts have been removed, if all those who were present at the death of Christ had likewise been ocular witnesses of his resurrection?

But without entering at present into the discussion of all that these interrogations contain, I ask of those who make them, if they regard the resurrection of Christ as doubtful? they will answer, that they look upon it as



PART certain. I continue to ask them, if the proofs  
 III. which evidence its certainty, be clear and convincing? without hesitation they will answer, Yes. What is therefore wanting, add I, to its certainty? do you not see, that if it be entire and perfect, that it is a matter of indifference whether it be known by a few persons, or by a greater number, and whether you confound it with a public notoriety, of which it is totally independent?

What signifies it to you, whether many doubt of the resurrection of Christ, if you are fully convinced, that you ought to believe it? do you cease to know, what you do know, because they are ignorant? and does the foundation of your faith, which you yourself judge certain and indubitable, become tottering, because they are unbelievers?

## ARTICLE II.

*Particular answer, which demonstrates, that all the public proofs would at last have terminated in a history, which at the most could but have been equally authorised with that which has been written by the evangelists, and attested by the apostles.*

**B**UT to cure this evil in its root, I suppose that Christ has done, what these people would have him do, and that after he  
 rose

rose from the dead, he shewed himself to several Jews, to the national council composed of priests and elders, or senators, or if you please, to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem. How is it we suppose such an apparition? could they all approach Christ, touch him, assure themselves of the truth of his wounds, by putting their fingers and hands into them, eat with him, embrace his knees, hear him speak of the ancient prophecies, and explain their true meaning?

Were such an apparition single; would it not then have been looked on by several as an empty vision, a phantom, a spirit clothed with the appearance only of a body? would not the absent have been still more diffident, would they not have thought that they had more precaution than the others, and more judgment to separate truth from falsehood? Christ would have been therefore obliged to shew himself anew, as often as there had been a new concourse of people at Jerusalem from the neighbouring cities. The Jews who were spread over the rest of the world, would have expected the same favour. And the Gentiles, to whom the prophets were unknown, would have had a better plea to require it. It would therefore have become necessary, that Christ separated from human converse by his new life, should have lived with them as familiarly, and in as sensible a manner, as he had done before his crucifixion. And then the doubt would not have fallen upon the resurrection, but upon Christ's death. Or rather both would have

CHAP.

X.



PART. have become uncertain by his conversation and  
 III. behaviour, which would differ very little in  
 appearance from that of other men.

But at length it would have been necessary to put an end to these apparitions, and oblige mankind who should be born in future ages, to content themselves with what the first had seen, and with the testimony which they had left. Perhaps in the first ages the recent memory of the facts would have supplied the place of sight; but in succeeding ages, distrust would have succeeded belief: they would have wished to see, since every body had formerly seen. And mankind would have been divided in their opinions, about what subsisted only in the memory of men.

It was therefore absolutely necessary, that a history of these apparitions should be written. But written, by whom, and in what time? are the pharisees and priests (those declared enemies of Christ, who were disposed to put Lazarus to death, that they might destroy the proof of Christ's having raised him from the dead) are they, I say, all to become his disciples and historians? if they are divided, what can we believe? if passion and artifice embroil the same facts, which sincerity makes others write, how laborious a task it will be to separate truth from falsehood? and what benefit could mankind reap from a multitude of writings opposite to one another, and equally suspected of partiality and prejudice?

In regard of time, would you have us wait for the writing of the history, till all cotemporary



porary and ocular witnesses are deceased? would CHAP. XII  
not this be taking from history all its certainty,  
and making it lose its principal proofs? would  
you have it written in the time when contrary  
passions are still on flame? we should fall by  
that means into a new uncertainty, still more  
dangerous than the former.

It is necessary for the satisfaction of mankind, that the authors of a history be cotemporaries, and be agreed in all essential points: otherwise they would only throw following ages into uneasiness and perplexity. They must likewise have been ocular witnesses, that they may say nothing in things of so great importance, but what they have seen with their eyes, and touched as it were with their hands. In fine, they must be sincere, full of candor and sincerity, and ready to suffer every thing, rather than to betray the truth. But then they must necessarily be disciples. And is it not plain, that by thus endeavouring to add something to the testimony of the evangelists, we are obliged to return to them, and admire with what wisdom God has chosen them, to collect together in the name of all mankind, the proofs of the resurrection of his Son, and to transmit them down with the exactest sincerity to latest ages? For after all the plans that imagination can frame, we are forced to own, that there is none more perfect, nor more plain, than to chuse a certain number of witnesses, who examine all themselves, \* who submit  
Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before  
of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after  
he rose from the dead. Acts x. 41.

PART not but with difficulty to the most sensible  
 III, proofs, who are at length overwhelmed, as it  
 were, with their evidence, their variety, and  
 frequent repetition; who write them naturally  
 without mixing reflections, and attest the truth  
 before the most dreadful tribunals, without suf-  
 fering themselves to be overcome either by  
 menaces, punishment, or death.

### ARTICLE III.

#### *Answer to all opposite reasons.*

I Add to this, in order not to leave unan-  
 swered the apparent reasons which have  
 been made use of to support another design,  
 that the resurrection of Christ must in-  
 evitably become a mystery to all those who  
 had not been witnesses of it, since it was  
 not possible that all men in all ages should have  
 seen it. That his death for the same reason is like-  
 wise a mystery, which becomes the object of  
 faith, since it is no longer an object of the senses.  
 That the scandal of the cross, far from being  
 removed, must last to the second coming of  
 Christ, to exercise our faith, and distinguish  
 the unfaithful. That the Jews, and particu-  
 larly those who had conspired his death,  
 have been as really convicted of injus-  
 tice, by the miracles which the apostles  
 wrought in his name, as if he had shewn him-  
 self to them, and reproached them with ob-  
 stinacy.



stinacy. That it has likewise been a glory of infinite value to the apostles to suffer for him, and to sacrifice their lives for him as he sacrificed his for them and all mankind. That it is contrary to the wisdom of God to multiply proofs in proportion as men are incredulous, and despise those which have been given them. That he knows what degree of light renders men inexcusable, and when it should withdraw its beams, to leave them to the punishment of their incredulity. That he has been pleased to mix in all the mysteries of religion, a clearness sufficient to comfort and strengthen the humble, and obscurity enough to confound and blind the false and proud sages of the world. And that he uses this mixture of shade and light, to distinguish those whose heart is pure and fond of light, from those whose corrupt disposition fears the light which condemns them, and seeks for darkness in religion, in order to be easy under the obscurity they love.



*It is contrary to all probability, or even to the nature of things, that the apostles should have had a design of deceiving the world, by asserting contrary to their conscience, that Christ was risen again. If they formed the design of deceiving, it must have been the effect of a general conspiracy, or of the persuasion of some one amongst them. Discourse of one of the apostles, containing all that the others could have thought.*

*1. Concerning the design, and the essential conditions on the part of the apostles, in order to make it succeed. 2. Of the means absolutely necessary for the execution of such a project. 3. Upon the precise time, in which it was to be executed. 4. The apostles are informed concerning the dispositions wherein they must be towards the persons they had deceived; and who were to be exposed by their credulity to the greatest persecutions.*

## ARTICLE I.

*If the apostles formed the design of deceiving, such a design must have been the effect of a general conspiracy, or of the persuasion of some one amongst them.*

**T**HE first chapters have been employed in establishing and proving the sincerity

ty of the evangelists and apostles, and whatever we have afterwards observed to convince us that they could not be deceived in relation to the resurrection of Christ, must have convinced us also, that they were certainly less capable of being deceivers in this point themselves. But I do not refuse, independently of all that has preceded, to enter into an examination of this new suspicion. I only desire, that all the consequences be well considered, and that men should know what must follow from accusing the apostles of having formed the design of deceiving mankind, and what kind of an undertaking it would be to endeavour, contrary to all truth and their own conscience, to persuade the whole world that Christ was risen again.

As they were several, they must all have had the same thought, at the same time, and very near the same idea and precise plan; or some one amongst them, after having formed the design, must have obtained the approbation of all the rest. These two suppositions are equal; but I prefer the latter, as being the most natural and proper, to make us sensible of the high extravagance of such a notion; tho' at the bottom it be the same thing, whether it be supposed to have been the effect of a general and sudden agreement, or that of the persuasion and counsel of some one amongst them.

Let us therefore hear in what manner he who was of the greatest authority amongst the apostles, and had most profoundly meditated

CHAP.

XII



PART tated on this subject, must have addressed  
 III. himself to the rest. \*

## ARTICLE II.

*In the following chapter we unite in the discourse of a single apostle whatever the others could have thought. First, upon the project, and the essential conditions on the part of the apostles, to make it succeed.*

THE master, whose disciples we were, is now no more: we had followed him full of great and glorious hopes in respect to him and to ourselves: but death hath determined all his projects, and blasted all our hopes: for we can no longer flatter ourselves that he will rise again, as he promised us. The time he prescribed is passed, and we should uselessly employ the remainder in expectation. We must then separate to return to our first professions, and bear in the sight of the people the shame of having been deceived; or remain united by taking a generous resolution of supporting our glory, by saying to every body that he is risen again, and that he is by consequence the true Messiah, expected by our nation, and foretold by the prophets. There is, methinks, cowardice in the first resolution, and a deal of courage in the last,

\* What follows may be read, without distinction of articles, because it is a continued discourse.



last, which for that reason is far more worthy of us, but is attended with great difficulties. CHAP. XII.

Yet it is not impossible to surmount them, if we are but capable of impenetrable secrecy. But we must well understand what these terms mean. For our business is not only to hold our tongues: we must besides this, know how to speak, and speak contrary to our own thoughts and conviction. We ought therefore in the first place, to make choice of faithful persons, who on one side are capable of advancing falsity with an intrepid air, which may remove all suspicion: and on the other are able to bury in a profound secrecy, the resolutions which we in concert take to-day. For all would be lost if a single person in whom we had put confidence, should betray us, by revealing to our enemies what should be known to ourselves alone.

As this point is essential, and must serve as a basis to our grand designs, it is necessary to foresee all that is capable of extorting the secret from persons, who may not be proof against every thing. We shall be exposed to many bad treatments, to prisons, to severe examinations, to death itself, and perhaps the most cruel kind of deaths, such as are of a lingering nature, and capable of shaking any but invincible resolutions. All this should be foreseen and despised. And we must look upon it as the height of glory, to be greater than all mankind together, and superior to all that their power or malice can invent against us.

PART

III.

But I must forewarn you, that in the greatest tortures we are not to hope for the least comfort or assistance from conscience: and that we shall even then be obliged to fortify ourselves against it; and stifle by a quick and determinate resolution, all those remorses which would be apt only to affright us, or by their terrors take our attention off from our only design, and from the honour which thence must redound to us. I am not ignorant, that courage and resolution, especially when it must be put to a long trial, and is violently attacked by the sense of an acute pain, is powerfully supported by the calm and peace of a good conscience, and by the internal persuasion, that one suffers for justice sake. But we are called to new proofs, that are not to be supported by any comfort or assistance, and which suppose in their very nature, that whatever supports other men, will become, in respect to us, temptations and impediments.

What I have mentioned contains a much deeper meaning than one would believe, unless it be explained. For we are to carry disinterestedness and generosity even so far, as to expect nothing from him, for whom we are to pass our lives in fears and sufferings, and for whom we must at length be sacrificed. For what can he do for us, who has been able to do nothing for himself? and will he ever deliver us from the hands of our persecutors and death, he who yielded himself to the violence of his enemies, and has not been able to rise again, as he had promised so many



many times, and even a few hours before he was taken. For I have still his last words as present to my mind, as if I had but just heard them. \* "All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee." He was deceived, and has deceived us. God has ordered things otherwise: he is supreme Lord: we are not to sound his judgments. And we ought not even to think too much of them.

You are astonished perhaps at this counsel! it is new, I grant, but necessary, and necessary to such a degree, that all our designs will prove abortive, if the fear of God should disturb them, and make us timid and pusillanimous in the testimony we are determined to give against him, in maintaining that he has raised again him whom he has left in the tomb; that he has acknowledged for the Messiah, him who assumed the title without the reality; and that he would have the whole world to believe in him, that they may be justified, tho' without doubt he has condemned him as an usurper of a glory which was not his due.

Such assertions in favour of falshood cost something in the beginning; but we shall grow easy by degrees, by imprinting strongly on our minds, that it is glorious to suffer without hope either from God or man: and even with a certainty of being punished by God and men,

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N

and

\* Matt. xxvi. 31.



Part and not only in this life, but eternally in  
 III the next. We may notwithstanding, ascend

to the highest point of courage, and become inaccessible to all the sentiments of human fear, or those which religion itself ought to inspire.

For we must come to this, or return shamefully to our nets and boats: and I desire you to consider well the necessity of this dilemma. He whom we grieve for has assumed openly the quality of Messiah. Nay he has done more, he has dared to call himself the Son of God, equal to him, of the same essence with him. We have seen him ready to be stoned for that boldness, without his having abated any thing of his pretensions. He reproached even in his last discourse after supper one of us, because he put some difference betwixt him and his heavenly Father, and because he was not persuaded, that he who saw the one, saw the other. All this was exaggerated. Experience has taught us, what we ought to abate. But we cannot deny, but God must have been highly provoked at such an affected equality with him, and that he cannot see without indignation, that we undertake to cause him to be acknowledged as his only Son, tho' he has to our own knowledge disavowed him.

This may frighten timid and vulgar souls, but we must have none amongst us but great men, men who consider what they expose themselves to, and from thence derive new vigour and resolution. Let us therefore examine all things maturely, let us enter into  
 I their

their relation and dependence, and afterwards CHAP. 9  
come to a declaration. We may not say the next. XIII

## ARTICLE III.

*In the second place, in the same discourse, all the means are proposed that are absolutely necessary for the execution of the project.*

**A**S methinks I am heard with joy; and instead of being intimidated by my reflections, you find them judicious and necessary; hear now what I shall add for the execution of so great a design, wherein it would be madness to engage without preparing the means of succeeding. First of all we will draw up together a false history of the apparitions of our common master. Those who have the best invention shall be employed in it. The others shall be judges. And all shall strongly imprint in their memories the facts and discourses which shall be agreed upon: because we must not think of retracting, and the least contradiction would be of fatal consequence.

To this labour we must join another, which requires more knowledge of the scriptures than we have: but we must supply it by study; and in the mean time, we must wait till the most subtle amongst us have examined in the books of Moses, the Psalms, and the Prophets, whatever regards the true Messiah, whom our forefathers expected, and whom we



PART have reason yet to expect, because he whom  
 III. we followed is an impostor. My design is, that  
 we should apply the whole to him, and wrest  
 in his favour all the prophecies that belong to  
 the true Messiah. The enterprize is bold; but  
 what else is our design but excess of bold-  
 ness?

A necessary consequence of this undertaking  
 is, that we resolve on one of these two points,  
 either to despise the sense of the scriptures,  
 tho' divine and inspired; or to despise the  
 scriptures themselves as false and fictitious. I  
 am not yet resolved on the choice: I ballance  
 betwixt doubts, and wait your counsel. But  
 the shortest way, methinks, would be, to look  
 upon all the scriptures as false; because it will  
 be difficult to corrupt them calmly, while we  
 revere them as divine: and we shall be much  
 freer and bolder, when we have got rid of this  
 veneration.

A second inevitable consequence is, to con-  
 sider all the promises and prophecies of the  
 Messiah as vain and frivolous, or at the least  
 as doubtful and uncertain: for if the scriptures  
 are false, the prophecies of the Messiah, which  
 are the most considerable part, are false like-  
 wise; or if we take a more moderate side, and  
 content ourselves with corrupting the sense of  
 the scriptures, without examining minutely  
 whether they be true or false; it is evident, we  
 must look upon all that they foretell us of the  
 Messiah as arbitrary, and dependent on such  
 interpretations as we shall please to give. The  
 Messiah by this means shall be in our account



an empty name: but we will highly set it off CHAP.  
among those who are not let into our secret, XI.  
because our honour is interested, and we should  
fall into contempt, if the high idea of the Mes-  
siah, joined with that positiveness with which  
we shall assure that our master is the true one,  
did not make us fully respected as being his  
disciples.

A third consequence equally clear, and  
unavoidable, but which has given me more  
trouble than all the rest, at the time I medi-  
tated this plan, which I propose to you to-  
day, and which will astonish you perhaps at  
first, is that we ought not henceforward to set  
much by the religion of our ancestors, nor  
consider it as established on solid grounds.  
For if the tradition of the Messiah be attack-  
ed, and if it signify little to take the scriptures  
in their true sense; or rather, (for we must be  
sincere to-day or never) if we do well to  
preach to the whole world, that our master is  
the true and only Messiah, whom we know  
certainly not to be so: and if we have a right  
to apply prophecies to him, which have ano-  
ther object: we must necessarily place our-  
selves above all that our fathers look upon as  
most sacred and indubitable.

Now consider well what this ends in. We  
have believed hitherto that the religion of our  
forefathers is true, and consequently the only  
one. It is in reality the most ancient, the  
most authorised, and the purest. It is the on-  
ly one grounded on divine revelation, or that  
boasts of being so. And it is certain, that if

## PART

## III.

it comes ever to appear doubtful in the minds of men, there is no other in the world, that ought to restrain us. This is the ultimate point I designed to bring you to. I desire not that you should consent immediately, it is a thing that deserves reflection; but what I desire is, that you compare diligently all the parts of the plan, which I have explained to you: that you examine the strict and necessary union; and that you persuade yourselves strongly, that you must admit of it all, or reject all, modifications and exceptions being here absolutely impossible.

## ARTICLE IV.

*Thirdly, the precise time wherein this project is to be executed, is determined in the same discourse.*

I Hope you will not be long determining: for there will be many things to do after you have taken your resolution, and the time in which I propose to concert and finish all is very short. We have but the interval betwixt this, and the feast of Pentecost; part of which is already elapsed, and the remainder we must husband well to prepare the order of false apparitions, to study in the scriptures all that regards the Messiah, to form the plan of a new religion, to efface in our own minds the traces and ideas of the ancient one, to fortify ourselves against our prejudices, against our fears,



fears, and all our worldly interests; for we are to except none; and we are going generously to renounce all the goods of this life, and all the hopes of the next.

What makes me chuse the feast of Pentecost is the extraordinary concourse of those of our nation, and even of a multitude of strangers at Jerusalem; for it will be a favourable opportunity to preach to them the resurrection of him, whom our priests and elders have crucified, and by this means to spread soon the news over the whole world. We are ignorant indeed of foreign tongues, and we are without interpreters; but our presence will suffice. Some will comprehend by signs what we would say to them, and others, who hear and understand our language, will assist them. We cannot work a miracle; but is it not a great one to dare to resist all that is mighty and respectable in our nation? There would be perhaps more prudence in not appearing all together, and not exposing ourselves all the first day, having nothing extraordinary or divine to command respect, or any protection to hope from God or man; but in a design like ours, a design singular in its whole nature, and contrary to common rules, of what use would prudence be? I am sure, that with our Galilean pronunciation, and with the goodly appearance we shall make, we shall persuade a multitude of people. And so confident am I of our success, that I include in my design not only Judea, but all people, all empires, in a word, all the universe; nor can the diversity of manners,



PART ners, religion and tongues, discourage me; nor  
 III. can the whole power of mankind in the least  
 affright me; nor is the improbability that ap-  
 pears in making Gentiles, who have no know-  
 ledge of the scriptures, or the Messiah, adore  
 as the Son of God, him whom the Jews have  
 crucified; nor is this improbability, I say, ca-  
 pable to retard a moment my zeal for him,  
 who has deceived us.

## ARTICLE V.

*In the fourth place, the apostles in the  
 same discourse are informed of the  
 dispositions they must have in regard  
 of those whom they have deceived,  
 and who must by their hasty credu-  
 lity be exposed to great persecutions.*

**B**UT it would not be right to preserve  
 that compassion and pity for others,  
 which we must endeavour to stifle in respect  
 to ourselves. Hence, when we shall perceive  
 that people seduced, by our discourses and  
 deep dissimulation, become exposed by their  
 credulity to great dangers; are proscribed, ba-  
 nished, thrown into dark prisons, torn by cruel  
 tortures, condemned to the fire, to wild beasts,  
 and to the most shameful and insupportable  
 punishments: instead of feeling an effeminate  
 compassion for their sufferings, and instead of  
 reproaching ourselves unreasonably with our  
 imposture

imposture by which we deceived them, we must applaud ourselves for their seduction; we must place our joy in their unhappiness; and we must not be afraid to honour, and cause them to be honoured as illustrious witnesses of the truth; tho' in our own eyes they be only martyrs to our hypocrisy, and to their own facility and indiscretion in believing falsehood. This article, tho' the last, is one of the most essential; for we are all naturally inclined to humanity, and we think we ourselves suffer in some degree what we see others suffer, especially when they are innocent, and when to innocence they join youth, candor, and an air of virtue, that makes a most sensible impression on the soul; whilst it would cost us but one word to free them from exquisite misery. This word which would discover all the mystery, ought never to slip from our mouths; there must not be so much as one sigh, or one groan that may betray us. And it will be proper to accustom ourselves to the most inhuman spectacles, in order to arrive by degrees to such a hardness of heart, as nothing can be supposed to move.

This is a faithful abridgment of the principal views that the apostles must have had, and which they had in reality, if they intended to deceive. That very plan which one of them has just now proposed to the others, has been followed and executed by all the rest, if they were not sincere. And far from considering it as a simple idea, we ought on the contrary to look upon it as the constant rule of their whole



**PART** whole conduct, of which we have only explained the principles, and shewn the consequences. Little therefore does it signify in the main, as we have already observed, whether they were by a general agreement entered into so extravagant a design, or whether they were induced by the persuasion of some particular persons. It is the design and its execution, which deserve attention; and their motives being uncertain and indifferent, are not worthy of inquiry.

## CH A P. XII.

*Judgment upon what has been proposed in the preceding chapter; that is to say, of the design in general, and the means of executing it. General, but invincible prejudices, which strip such a design of all probability. Intire impossibility of secrecy amongst so many accomplices. Tho' the number of accomplices had been less, a perpetual secrecy contrary to conscience, is impossible. Persecutions and torments would have forced some one to have discovered it. There can be no probability in the suppositions inseparably connected with the execution of the project. The invention of false apparitions cannot possibly be maintained. Observations on the concise, and in appearance careless manner, in which the evangelists relate the apparitions of Christ, and which shew them to be true.*

## ARTICLE



ARTICLE I.

*General but invincible prejudices, which  
strip such a design of all probability.*

**T**HE bare recital above given, is sufficient, methinks, to expose the improbability of so absurd, so horrible, and so impious a system, a system diametrically opposite to all the principles and motives of human actions. I am only afraid, that it may be looked on as exaggerated; and that some will think, it might be shewn in a more favourable light. But if there be any of this opinion, I dare say, they are mistaken. For I have rather softened it, to avoid such expressions, as give offence to godly people, tho' they seem necessary to represent the crimes of those who attack religion; and every one will be thoroughly persuaded of this, if they will but take the pains to examine the whole over again in this chapter.

I shall dwell only on certain points, and I shall chuse those which are within the reach of every one's capacity; common sense, and integrity being the only necessary qualifications to judge of them.

Is it natural that all the apostles, and with them many of the disciples, who expected the resurrection of Christ, or who knew at least that he had foretold it, should have entered

**PART III** tered into a plot so criminal, as what I have represented? that not one of them opposed it? that not one of them weighed its frightful consequences? not one of them was restrained by the fear of God or man? not one of them perceived the extreme folly of sacrificing all for nothing, and of becoming unhappy and criminal without hope or benefit? not one of them was moved with the impossibility of the enterprize? not one of them quitted such a gang of villains, who were going to found a new religion upon perjury, and on a false testimony given against God himself? not one of them was afterwards touched with remorse of conscience? that not one of them should inform a relation, a friend, a benefactor, of this mystery of iniquity, to prevent them from falling into the snare?

All this, tho' infinitely improbable, appears still more so if possible, when we recollect, that these men so abandoned to iniquity, were above three years the disciples of a master, who required them to be so sincere, and universally known for such, that they should never need an oath; but that plain *yes*, and plain *no*, should supply its place; and that they should imitate the simplicity of children, and think themselves obliged to give an account to God of every idle word.

## ARTICLE



ARTICLE II.

*Intire impossibility of secrecy amongst  
so many accomplices.*

**B**UT setting aside such strong and just prejudices, let us only consider this project in its self, and see, whether it does not contain manifest impossibilities? it is grounded upon an impenetrable secret. And this secret is not only entrusted to several conspirators, but to several women, who enter into the plot, and are even the first movers of it. For it is they, who undertake first to spread the news of the resurrection, who have the principal share in the apparitions, and excite the zeal of the apostles. If these facts be true, the plot is false: and if the facts be invented, the secrecy of the plot vanishes. These women, who have so great a share in the management of the whole affair, are famous amongst the disciples of Christ. They have their families and friends; they had not spread during the first days these reports, which were not then invented. They on a sudden appear very knowing, tho' quite ignorant before. Their apparitions are on the sunday, and even then they knew it not. To how many questions are they not going to be exposed? how will they extricate themselves? by what art will they avoid falling into contradictions, and betraying the cause? if they be not let into the secret, will they  
not



**PART** not be astonished at the false visions attributed  
**III** to them? and will they not deny rather than  
 defend them? and if they be accomplices in  
 the falsity, how can they hide it, since it is so  
 visible? how will they conceal a mystery of  
 iniquity so ill concerted, and trusted to so  
 many, who might have a greater difficulty  
 than others to keep a secret.

But there is something still more surprizing.  
 Above five hundred persons affirm that they  
 have seen Christ risen, and that they were all  
 present at this sight the same day. It is not  
 a relation made of them, but they themselves  
 relate it; they must then be accomplices in  
 the conspiracy; if they tell a lie, then they  
 are let into the secret. It must be therefore  
 entrusted to more than five hundred accomplices,  
 besides the apostles and women named in  
 the gospel. How then can it be impenetrable?  
 and how shall it be kept among so many  
 rogues and impostors, who are governed only  
 by their capriciousness and passions, and who,  
 in defiance to religion and conscience, have  
 freed themselves from all manner of engagements,  
 whether right or wrong?

Many of these men were alive, when the  
 apostle called them to witness. \* If they were  
 deceivers, the number of such was then multiplied  
 without discretion or measure; and secrecy  
 was no longer possible: and if on the  
 contrary they were sincere, as really they  
 were, nothing is more extravagant and foolish  
 than the conspiracy attributed to the apostles.

A R-

ARTICLE III.

*Tho' the number of accomplices had been less, yet a perpetual secrecy, contrary to conscience, is impossible.*

**H**AD they even kept this secret intirely to themselves, without communicating it to any body else, they were in too great a number, and the time of silence too long, not to let it get wind. One might be silent on an important occasion, of short continuance, and not charged with the same strictness; but a perpetual silence among so many accomplices, is neither natural nor possible. The inconstancy and levity alone of the human heart, without any other cause, extorts from us what we have resolved to conceal. We have always some confident or another, to whom we must unbosom ourselves, in order to be eased of the burden of a secret, which becomes every day more heavy, when it is deposited in our breasts only, and is essentially connected with the interest of several others. If some can do this without unbosoming, such a resolution is very uncommon.

Add to this divers interests, which change with the times, and various passions, which make the same men very different from what they were. A discontent, a jealousy, a preference which offends them, a dispute, divides the

the

**PART** the most intimate friends, and draws from them  
**III** many things of which they intended never to  
 have spoken. Among men who are connected  
 merely by falsehood, such divisions are common,  
 and the secret is equally exposed, whether the  
 person continues or repents of his villainy.

It is even impossible but among so many  
 persons who engage in a criminal project, con-  
 trary to their own conviction and conscience,  
 there must be some who will be moved by a  
 salutary remorse, and who at last will listen to  
 their conscience and duty, especially when they  
 risk nothing in following it, and when by ha-  
 ving a greater tranquility within, they become  
 likewise more happy in the eyes of men, to  
 whom they will cease to be odious, and from  
 whom they will no longer have any thing to  
 fear. This was the condition of the apostles,  
 who from a state of persecution and misery  
 necessarily annexed to their obstinacy in the  
 senseless system of the preceding chapter,  
 might have passed to a sweet and tranquil life,  
 if they had ceased to preach their doctrine,  
 and would likewise have found inward repose  
 and peace of conscience, if they had discover-  
 ed the pernicious secret which troubled the  
 whole world.

## ARTICLE



ARTICLE IV.

*Persecutions and torments would have forced some of them to make a discovery.*

**T**HE persecutions which the apostles and disciples of Christ suffered, are known to the whole world: and if it be necessary, we will prove this point in another place: they lasted till their death, which in respect to most of them was cruel and violent; and were diversified in a thousand manners; of which we may read an abridgment in what St. Paul says of those he had suffered before he wrote his second <sup>†</sup> epistle to the Corinthians. These sufferings we are accustomed to look upon as holy and precious, because we are persuaded they were endured for the sake of justice and truth: and we find them happy in themselves in the midst of the most severe trials, because we believe them full of faith, and filled with the internal consolation of the Holy Spirit. But we must now change all these ideas, and consider them as impostors and villains tormented by men, and abandoned by God, because of their obstinacy in maintaining a lie, of which they knew the falsity, and by which they intended to subvert all religion, in attacking the divinity of the scriptures and the promise of the Messiah.

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They

<sup>†</sup> 2 Cor. xi. 23, and following.

PART III. They have nothing before their eyes but their crime : they expect nothing from Christ : they fear with reason to be eternally punished for the false testimony which they have obstinately given against God himself : they suffer most exquisite pains, which they could have avoided by a single word : and they chuse rather to expire in torments, than to say that single word, a word that would do justice to truth, which they have confined in silence, inspired by fury and despair ; and wherein they were not supported or comforted by any of the motives that strengthen the patience and courage of other men. And, what is still more extraordinary, they give thanks to God in their torments : they bless him with love : they invoke his succour with confidence. They have without intermission the name of Christ in their mouths, whom they look upon as present at their conflicts, as a witness of their patience, as ready to recompense their sufferings by an immortal glory : and they all say they meet death with joy, in hopes of seeing and being united to him. But what astonishes me most of all is, that they do not believe a word of what they say in these horrible tortures : that all this external appearance is mere hypocrisy ; and that their pretended confidence in God and Christ is only to veil their despair and invincible obstinacy, which they know to be unjust, and with which the piercing cries of conscience reproach them, cries that are more insupportable than the most exquisite punishments. If this be probable, every thing is so ;

and



and henceforward all the characters of truth and falsehood will be confounded.

CHAR. XIII

But will this probability be strained to that monstrous excess, as to persuade us they were all as impenetrable as steel; and that all without exception should not fall into the least contradiction or inconsistency; and that with the same hypocrisy they all should have the same resolution to carry on the mask or imposture? If they cannot be moved for themselves, will they have no regard for their friends; for their parents, for those whom they have cast into danger by their discourses, and whom they will see exposed to cruel trials? Will their bowels never be moved with compassion? Will not the blood of so many people, whose sole crime must be in having listened to them, will it not, I say, soften their hardness? Will they always be insensible to the exile, the captivity and misery of so many honest men, whom they have seduced? And will they quietly behold the whole universe thrown into a commotion for an illusion or a phantom, which the sincere deposition of one of them would entirely destroy.

Q. 2. ARTICLE



## ARTICLE V.

*There can be no probability in the suppositions inseparably connected with the execution of the project.*

THE apostles are supposed capable of having despised the true sense of the scriptures, of having studied them in order to corrupt them, of having gone even so far as to doubt of their divinity, and to believe them false and supposititious; and this with a design of transferring to a false Messiah, known by themselves as such, the glory of the true Messiah expected by their nation, and so long promised by the prophets. But can we forget that these horrible calumnies are brought against Jews full of zeal for the law, of veneration for the scriptures, of passion for the Messiah? Do we reflect that those Jews, besides the sentiments imbibed from their infancy, had been instructed for more than three years by Christ, who often cited the scripture, and always as divine and inspired, and had told them on some important occasions that every word of it was exactly true, and that all it contains, even to a point or iota, should be fully accomplished? In fine, do not we know, that the hope most deeply ingraved in the heart of a Jew, is that of the Messiah; that this hope is all in all to him; and that there is no supposition more foolish

foolish than that of thinking a Jew capable of renouncing his hope of a true Messiah, in order to impose upon others a chimerical and fabulous one, of whose spuriousness he is fully convinced?

CHAP.  
XII.

ARTICLE VI.

*The invention of the false apparitions of Christ cannot possibly be maintained.*

WITH regard to the apparitions of Christ after his resurrection, that they were invented by the apostles, is a notion that cannot possibly be maintained. To believe such an absurdity, one must either never have read them, or in reading them have had no judgment or relish of truth. The whole is simple, edifying, majestic, full of instruction and light, worthy of a God, who humbled himself even to death for the sins of men, and who is risen for their justification and glory; great with dignity in his humiliations, great with modesty in his elevation, full of clemency in both these states, and knowing how to unite in a manner inimitable to any but himself, sovereign majesty with paternal sweetness and goodness.

This character he preserves in all his apparitions, whether to the holy women, or his disciples. And it would not be in the power



PART  
III.

of art at this day, even after these great models, to imagine any new apparitions that should be of the same stamp, without falling into imitation. How much therefore must the original idea be beyond the faculties of the apostles? and what method must they have taken to give us such perfect models, had they consulted only falsehood and imposture?

Could they, for instance, have ever imagined any thing like the apparitions of the two disciples going to Emmaus, the story of which always strikes us, and has new beauties in the eye of those who are judges in such matters? Could they have invented the apparition at the lake of Tiberias, so full of mysteries and relations to the first establishment of the gospel, and to the fall and apostlehip of Peter? Would they have ever made Christ answer Magdalene in the manner he did, and which few interpreters have rightly understood? Would they have granted the holy women the privilege of being first informed of his resurrection by the angels, and by himself; a privilege which they deserved notwithstanding more than the apostles, for following him even to the cross, and for having sought his body in the sepulchre? Would not they have mixed with their speeches a false lustre, long speeches, superfluous miracles, things which religious impostors necessarily fall into; instead of that noble and majestic simplicity, the characteristic of truth, and divine operations? Lastly, had they composed a false history of the apparitions of Christ,



Christ, would they have abridged it, as St. Matthew has done? or related them with an air so seemingly indifferent as St. Mark?

CHAP.  
XII.  
III.

ARTICLE VII.

*Observations on the concise and seemingly careless manner in which the evangelists relate the apparitions of Christ, which is a proof of their veracity.*

**B**UT this deserves a particular reflection, because it not only destroys the base suspicion we have been here refuting, but is moreover an admirable proof of the sincerity of the evangelists, and their abhorrence of all affectation. St. Matthew, the first and oldest of all, speaks only of the apparition of the angel, who frightened the guards at the sepulchre, and comforted the holy women; of that of Christ to the same women, who hastened to carry the news to his apostles; and of that wherein he shewed himself to them on the mountain of Galilee, which he seems to confound with the last that preceded his ascension, and which he limits to the apostles alone, without saying any thing of the great number of witnesses mentioned by St. Paul.

St. Mark passes over the apparition of Christ to the holy women: he says that Mary Magdalene was the first who saw him, touches but very lightly upon the apparition of the disci-

**PART.** ples going to Emmaus<sup>†</sup>; and hurries away to the last, at which the apostles received the final order, of preaching the gospel thro' the whole world; omitting all that St. John and St. Luke have said, tho' he knew it as well as they, as did also St. Matthew; and appearing under no concern for the ignorance we might be in, in relation to these astonishing wonders, in case his had been the only history except that of St. Matthew, which he seems to abridge. Is it thus the inventors of the apparitions of Christ would have conducted themselves? Would such a modesty, and such an indifference, might I use the expression, have been to their purpose? Would they have so rapidly passed over some things, and suppressed others? And would they not on the contrary have multiplied, exaggerated, and dwelt on such as they thought would make the strongest impression, especially in the first histories they published to the world, whose credit and reputation were necessary for a success, which commonly depends on the manner of beginning.

The evangelists must have depended intirely upon truth and the efficacy of the grace of God, to have contented themselves with so concise and simple a narration. And whoever should be so unfortunate as to suspect them of having had a design of deceiving, must be unacquainted with the characteristics of sincerity, as well as of imposture.

#### C H A P.

† "After that he appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked and went into the country." See all that St. Mark says, xvi. 12.



We continue to prove, that it was impossible for

the evangelists and apostles to have had a de-  
sign of deceiving. The resurrection of Christ

was certain from the Sunday morning, and the  
lie published by the soldiers who guarded his  
tomb is a demonstrable proof of it. St. Paul

converted by Christ after his resurrection, and  
convincing the Jews at Damascus of the truth

of his resurrection before he had any conver-  
sation with the apostles, is a manifest proof of

their sincerity. How far the apostles were  
from bearing a false testimony against God

himself, by assuring, contrary to their own  
conscience, that he had raised Christ from the

dead. Had the apostles hoped in Christ only  
during this life, and had they not been certain

of his resurrection, they would have been the  
most unhappy of men; so far would they have

been from placing their happiness in suffering  
for a chimera of their own invention. All

their writings are proofs of the unshaken con-  
fidence of their faith, and certainty of their

hope, not only when they speak to the simplest  
amongst the faithful, but when they exhort

their dearest disciples, or when they animate  
themselves to patience. Instead of encourag-

ing the least artifice or dissimulation, they  
would have the christians be known by their

love of simplicity and candour. The language  
of the apostles condemns imposture and decep-

tion, instead of being the organ of lies. Before  
we suspect them of falsity, we ought first

to prove the falsity of their miracles, whose  
certainty is evident.

A R.



## PART

## III

## ARTICLE I.

*The resurrection of Christ was certain from the Sunday morning, and the lie published by the soldiers who guarded his tomb, is a demonstrable proof of it.*

WE cannot attribute to the apostles the report which was spread abroad by the soldiers who guarded the tomb, that whilst they were fallen asleep, his body was stolen away by his disciples. This report was invented on purpose to obscure the verity of the resurrection: and it was directly opposite to the design of the apostles, which was to have it believed for certain. Now this very report is a clear proof, that from day-break on Sunday, the body of Christ was no longer in the sepulchre, that the stone placed at the entrance, and sealed by the Jews, was removed; that every one had the liberty of going in, the guards placed there by the priests and elders being no longer of any use, and that the linen alone remained: it follows therefore, either that the report spread by the guards, and supported by the credit of priests and elders was true; or that Christ really rose from the dead. There is a manifest contradiction in the first supposition; for sleeping witnesses can never be proper vouchers of what

past during their sleep: a great stone round which they kept their watch, could not possibly be removed without difficulty and noise; and men who had undertaken to carry off a dead body in a hurry, with great peril and fear, would never have dreamt of leaving the linen in which he had been wrapt. The resurrection of Christ was indubitable from the Sunday morning, and there was no need the apostles should hold a council together to concert a long train of fictions and lies, in order to gain them credit. The Jews accusing them of having stolen the body of Christ upon the morning of the third day, prove demonstrably, that from that morning Christ was no longer in the sepulchre: but they no ways prove that his disciples had stolen him: and the divine providence did not permit such an accusation, or that it should gain credit amongst the Jews, but to fix the notoriety of the fact by those very people who pretended to deny it, and to justify the integrity and innocence of the apostles, by an improbable charge.



## ARTICLE II.

*St. Paul converted by Christ after his resurrection, and convincing the Jews at Damascus of the truth of his resurrection before he had had any conversation with the apostles, is a manifest proof of their sincerity.*

**H**AD I chosen to avoid entering into a detail, I could have confuted the mad project attributed by some to the apostles, by the single example of St. Paul, who had as much zeal as they to preach and maintain the resurrection of Christ; but could have had no share in their deliberations and councils. He was at that time one of their most active enemies, he prosecuted them with fury: he was not therefore one of their accomplices. How then became he a believer? did they communicate to him their secret? did they gain him over by discovering to him their tricks and imposture? did they soften this man thirsting for christian blood, by owning to him, that the heads of this sect were nothing but a pack of the vilest hypocrites and impostors? by what illusive arts did they seduce a man so conversant in scriptures, so proud of the knowledge he thought he had, so prejudiced against the miracles of Christ himself, so filled with those foolish ideas the jewish nation had



had imbibed concerning their Messiah, who CHAP. XIII.  
was to reign with great splendor, and so op-  
posite to the faith in a Messiah obedient to  
death, even the opprobrious death of the  
cross?

But how could they seduce a man who hated them mortally, whilst he was head of an opposite party, and had had no commerce with them when he confuted the Jews at Damascus, proving by the scriptures, that Christ was the Messiah, and was to suffer, and be raised again. Could the apparition he said he had had, when he was commissioned by the high-priest to imprison the christians, and was on the road to put it in execution, could this apparition, I say, be likewise of their invention? had he concerted with them all the circumstances? had he prepared those who accompanied him, to such a fiction? and can the blood of Stephen, with which he was still stained, be supposed a proper means to prove the secret commerce, which he had had with those whom he endeavoured to exterminate?

To fair and impartial judges, this proof alone is sufficient to demonstrate the sincerity of the apostles. For St. Paul preaches as well as they the resurrection of Christ. He preaches it with a more ardent, in all appearance, and more violent zeal. He preaches it without having ever heard them. He preaches it when he had scarce laid down the arms he took up against them. He looks upon the apparitions that had proved it as indubitable. He adds that, which he says he himself had seen in particular.

**PART** particular. Can there be a more sensible demonstration of the uprightness and sincerity of the apostles, or any thing more capable of banishing every unjust suspicion that malice and infidelity can form?

### ARTICLE III.

*How far the apostles were from bearing a false testimony against God himself, by assuring, contrary to their own conscience, that he had raised Christ from the dead.*

**SOME** may imagine, who do not chuse to examine things thoroughly, but only search for pretexts not to believe, that the apostles, by a mistaken love and respect for Christ, were not perhaps unlikely to feign that he was risen, and to think that the good use which they intended to make of that lie, would render them excusable to God. But independently of all that has been said hitherto against such an absurdity, whose natural and inevitable consequences are horrible, St. Paul in the name of all the apostles, rejects with indignation, not the real suspicion, which was not in question, but the bare appearance of suspicion. \*  
 “ For I delivered unto you first of all, that  
 “ which I also received, how that Christ died  
 “ for our sins, according to the scriptures: and  
 “ that

\* 1 Cor. xv. 3, &c.



" that he was buried, and that he rose again CHAP. I  
 " the third day according to the scriptures. XIII.  
 " and that he was seen of Cephas, then of the  
 " twelve. After that, he was seen of above  
 " five hundred brethren at once: of whom  
 " the greater part remain unto this present,  
 " but some are fallen asleep. After that he  
 " was seen of James, then of all the apostles.  
 " And last of all he was seen of me also, as  
 " of one born out of due time. For I am  
 " the least of the apostles, that am not meet  
 " to be called an apostle, because I persecuted  
 " the church of God. † Now if Christ be  
 " preached that he rose from the dead, how  
 " say some among you, that there is no re-  
 " surrection of the dead? but if there be no  
 " resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not  
 " risen. And if Christ be not risen, then is  
 " our preaching vain, your faith is also vain.  
 " Yea, and we are found false witnesses of  
 " God, because we have testified of God, that  
 " he raised up Christ: whom he raised not  
 " up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the  
 " dead rise not, then is Christ not raised. And  
 " if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain,  
 " ye are yet in your sins." Every thing in  
 these words is very remarkable, and worthy of  
 a particular attention; for we see on one side  
 with what certainty the truth of the resurre-  
 ction of Christ is established, on the proofs  
 which he himself has given of it, in shewing  
 himself many times to his disciples, and lastly,  
 to his persecutor. On the other, we discover  
how

† V. 12, &c.



**PART** how far St. Paul was from believing that the  
**III.** false persuasion of Christ's resurrection, could  
 be the foundation of any good, or that God  
 could excuse the false testimony which would  
 be given against him, because of the pretended  
 good intention of the false witnesses. Our  
 preaching is vain, says the great apostle, and  
 your faith is also vain, if Christ be not risen.  
 We are the first deceived if we have deceived  
 you. Ye are still in your sins, if only the  
 death of Christ be real: and not his resurrection.  
 But besides our ancient iniquities, we are cul-  
 pable of a new crime, in giving a false testi-  
 mony against God, which not only consists in  
 calling to witness a falsity, but in imputing to  
 him that falsity, by affirming, that he has  
 raised as his Son, and as the Messiah, a man  
 who was neither one nor the other, but had  
 presumed to usurp the name.

It is therefore evident, that this apostle  
 preached sincerely and honestly the resurrection  
 of Christ; that he had a horror of lying and  
 false testimony; and believed he would have  
 laboured in vain, and deceived those who had  
 believed in Christ upon his word, if his  
 preaching and their faith had not been found-  
 ed on truth. It is likewise evident by his  
 epistles, and by the history of the acts of the  
 apostles, that he laboured more than any,  
 and that the east and west had been filled with  
 his doctrine. Why then should we search in  
 the lies of the other apostles for a new source of  
 the faith of the church? why suspect them of  
 a crime which St. Paul detested? with what  
 pro-

probability should we rather accuse them than him, of having expected some fruits of a vain predication and faith? and would it not at the same time be the highest injustice and folly, in a similar case and supported on the same foundations, to look upon St. Paul as sincere, and the apostles as deceivers?

ARTICLE IV.

*Had the apostles hoped in Christ only during this life, and had not been certain of his resurrection, they would have thought themselves the most unhappy of men, so far they would have been from placing their happiness in suffering for a chimera of their own invention.*

According to the ridiculous project which we are now examining, the apostles must have been all prepared to suffer the most severe trials; and the most cruel death, for a lie of which they were the authors, and from which they could expect nothing but punishment in the other life, without hoping for any thing in this. We see plainly that this was foolish, and entirely contrary to nature and experience: but it is proper to hear St. Paul on this point, whom without doubt we cannot accuse of wanting courage.



PART rage. \* " If Jesus Christ be not risen, then  
 III. " they also who are fallen asleep in Christ are  
 " perished. If in this life only we have hope  
 " in Christ, we are of all men most mis-  
 " erable. † And why stand we in jeopardy  
 " every hour? I protest by your rejoicing  
 " which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I  
 " die daily. If after the manner of men I  
 " have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what  
 " advantageth it me if the dead rise not? let  
 " us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die."

This is the language of truth, a language simple and natural, a language founded on the unalterable inclinations and sentiments of the heart. And yet St. Paul supposes only that Christ is not risen, and not that he himself had the wickedness to feign that he was: which renders still more insensible and chimerical the courage of those who could have invented that lie, and would have laid down their lives to support it. If the apostles had not believed as firmly as St. Paul, that Christ was risen, they could not, like him, have exposed themselves to sufferings and death. A lively faith and a great hope equally supported them. And then invincible patience was the fruit of the full conviction they had, that Christ was in heaven, and that they should reign there with him.

\* 1 Cor. xv, 18.

† V. 30.



ARTICLE V.

*All their writings are proofs of the unshaken constancy of their faith, and the certainty of their hope, not only when they speak to the simplest amongst the faithful, but when they exhort their dearest disciples, or when they animate themselves to patience.*

ONE must never have read the writings of the apostles, to suspect that they had a design of deceiving, and not see the steadiness of their faith and immobility of their hope.

\* “ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. To an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you. Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, tho’ now for a season (if need be) ye are in heaviness through many temptations: that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, tho’ it be tried in the fire, might be found unto praise,

P 2

“ and

\* 1 Pet. i. 3, &c.

PART " and honour, and glory, at the appearing of

III. " Jesus Christ: whom having not seen, ye

" love: in whom tho' now ye see him not,  
 " yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeak-  
 " able and full of glory. Receiving the end  
 " of your faith, which is the salvation of your  
 " souls." Can we look upon these lively ex-  
 pressions, which come from and touch the  
 heart; can we, I say, look upon them as the  
 language of a double and designing man, a man  
 who says what he does not think, and who  
 plays with the credulity of those who hear  
 him. † " But God who is rich in mercy, for  
 " his great love wherewith he loved us. Even  
 " when we were dead in sins, hath quickened  
 " us together with Christ (by grace ye are  
 " saved). And hath raised us up together, and  
 " made us fit together in heavenly places in  
 " Christ Jesus. That in ages to come he  
 " might shew the exceeding riches of his  
 " grace, in his kindness towards us, through  
 " Christ Jesus." † " If ye then be risen with  
 " Christ, seek those things which are above,  
 " where Christ sitteth on the right hand of  
 " God. Set your affection on things above,  
 " not on things on the earth. For ye are  
 " dead, and your life is hid with Christ in  
 " God. When Christ who is our life shall  
 " appear, then shall ye also appear with him  
 " in glory." 'Tis an injury to reason, and  
 even humanity, to search in a moral so  
 pure and sublime, for artifice and deceit.

Those

† Eph. ii. 4, &c.

† Coloss. iii. 1.

Those who are capable of so unreasonable a diffidence, deserve neither to believe nor be believed. CHAP. XIII.

“Thou \* therefore, my son, be strong in  
“the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the  
“things that thou hast heard of me among  
“many witnesses, the same commit thou to  
“faithful men, who shall be able to teach  
“others also. Thou therefore endure hard-  
“ness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. . . .  
“Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of  
“David, was raised from the dead, according  
“to my gospel, wherein I suffer trouble as an  
“evil doer, even unto bonds: but the word of  
“God is not bound. Therefore I endure all  
“things for the elects sake, that they may also  
“obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus,  
“with eternal glory.” † Was Timothy in the  
secret, Timothy who was so intimately united  
with St. Paul, as the apostle says to the Philip-  
pians? was he deceived by his master, or did  
he become a deceiver with him? was there in  
St. Paul so unworthy an artifice and so base a  
treason, to exhort so lively the most faithful of  
his disciples and friends, to expose himself to  
all dangers, even death, for a false gospel, and  
to conjure him to remember the resurrection  
of Christ, and the glory which would attend  
it, in order to precipitate him the more quick-  
ly into real and dreadful evils; and this for an  
P 3 imposture,

\* 2 Tim. ii. 1, &c.

† “But ye know the proof of him, that as one with the  
“Father he hath served with me in the gospel. Philip. ii. 22.



PART imposture, the mystery of which he artfully  
 III. concealed from him? do we need other proofs  
 of the sincerity of both, than the chains of  
 St. Paul, and the labours before that time gone  
 through by Timothy? and can the truth of  
 the resurrection of Christ, which is the founda-  
 tion of the patience of the master and the  
 consolation of the disciple, have witnesses more  
 worthy of credit?

But still let us hear St. Paul: † “ But what  
 “ things were gain to me [in my first estate,  
 before I was called to the faith] “ those I  
 “ counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and  
 “ I count all things but loss, for the excellen-  
 “ cy of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my  
 “ Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of  
 “ all things, and do count them but dung that  
 “ I may win Christ . . . that I may know him,  
 “ and the power of his resurrection, and the  
 “ fellowship of his sufferings, being made con-  
 “ formable unto his death, if by any means I  
 “ might attain unto the resurrection of the dead:  
 “ not as though I had already attained, either  
 “ were already perfect; but I follow after, if  
 “ that I may apprehend that for which also I  
 “ am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren,  
 “ I count not myself to have apprehended; but  
 “ this one thing I do, forgetting those things  
 “ which are behind, and reaching forth for  
 “ those things which are before. I press to-  
 “ ward the mark, for the prize of the high  
 “ calling of God in Christ Jesus.” Nothing  
 can

† Philip. iii. 7;

can be added to these expressions, full of di-  
vine ardour, which not only inflame, but in-  
spire those who read them, and cover with  
ignominy and shame those, who knowing nei-  
ther St. Paul nor the other apostles, are so un-  
happy as to suspect them of artifice and de-  
ceit.

All their writings are established on the  
truth of the resurrection of Christ. 'Tis on  
account of it, that they exhort, instruct, and  
comfort: from it they draw the chief rules of  
the christian morality, and the principal mo-  
tives of patience. Upon it they found the  
hope of future bliss. 'Tis in this rich stock  
they find all the mysteries of religion, which  
are as it were the natural consequences thereof.  
And one may abridge all their doctrine by  
these few words, which are a kind of defini-  
tion of christianity, and of those who have its  
spirit and truth. || "For our ['tis St. Paul  
who speaks in the name of all] "conversation  
"is in heaven, from whence also we look for the  
"Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall  
"change our vile body, that it may be fashion-  
"ed like unto his glorious body, according to  
"the working whereby he is able even to sub-  
"due all things unto himself."

Were it not for the grandeur and importance  
of the truth of which I treat, I should dwell  
less upon proofs, and should run through them  
with greater rapidity. But the resurrection of  
Christ well established, becomes the proof of

P 4

all;

PART all; and 'tis abridging our labour on other  
 III. points, not to spare it in this. We must more-  
 over overpower the minds of those, who have  
 some inquietude under the yoke of faith, by  
 the multitude of proofs which demonstrate its  
 certainty, and the necessity of submitting to it.  
 And 'tis even doing service to the whole world,  
 to bring under one point of view all that can  
 augment respect for the authority of the  
 apostles, who in respect to us are the only  
 channel of tradition and truth.

## ARTICLE VI.

*Instead of encouraging the least artifice  
 or dissimulation, they would have the  
 christians be known by their love of  
 simplicity and candour.*

THE apostles were so far from encour-  
 aging the least artifice or dissimulation,  
 that they would have the christians known by  
 their love of simplicity and candour. || “ Where-  
 fore laying aside all malice and all guile, and  
 “ hypocrisies, and envies, and evil-speakings :  
 “ as new-born babes desire the sincere milk of  
 “ the word, that ye may grow thereby. If  
 “ also ye have tasted that the Lord is graci-  
 “ ous. † . . . . Finally, be ye all of one mind,  
 “ having

|| 1 Pet. ii. 2. Τὸ λογικὸν ἄδολον γάλα ἐπιπο-  
 θήσατε.

† Ibid. ch. iii. ver. 8. & 10.



“having compassion one of another; love as CHAP.  
“brethren, be pitiful, be courteous. . . . For XIII.  
“he that will love life, and see good days, let  
“him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips  
“that they speak no guile.” \* “Whatsoever  
“things are true, says St. Paul, whatsoever  
“things are honest, whatsoever things are  
“just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever  
“things are lovely, . . . think of these things.”  
“Lie not one to another, seeing that ye  
“have put off the old man with his deeds.”  
“† Wherefore putting away lying, speak every  
“man truth with his neighbour: for we are  
“members one of another.” || And there shall in  
“no wise enter into it any thing that defileth,  
“neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or  
“maketh a lie: but they which are written  
“in the Lamb’s book of life. ‡ But the fear-  
“ful and unbelieving, and abominable, and  
“murderers, and whoremongers, and force-  
“rers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have  
“their part in the lake which burneth with  
“fire and brimstone: which is the second  
“death.”

Would men guilty of an infinite number of lies, who taught nothing but lies, and who endeavoured the establishment of known falsehood; would such men, I say, ever have dared to pronounce such a dreadful anathema against liars? Would they thus exclude themselves from the heavenly Jerusalem? Would they erase their own names from the book of life?

\* Philip. v. 8. † Ephes. iv. 25. || Rev. xxi. 27. ‡ Ibid. ver. 8.

**PART** life? Would they pass sentence on themselves,  
**III.** to consume for ever in a lake of burning fire?

Would they have inspired into their disciples such a hatred of dissimulation, so great a love for sincerity, so high an idea of christian infancy, and of the amiable candour which is the characteristic thereof? Would a perfidious sect, that owed its foundation and progress to imposture, whose first masters had not been skilled in any thing but artifice and hypocrisy, all whose mysteries were but so many fictions; would such a sect, I say, give the highest encomiums to ingenuousness and simplicity? Would they lay it down as a maxim, that the least duplicity is a crime in religion? Would they have suffered death rather than conceal their faith under equivocal terms? Would they not have provided for their safety by methods like those of the Gnostics, the Manichæans, the Priscillianists, and some others, to whom perjury and lying were permitted by those who had seduced them?

## ARTICLE

ARTICLE VII.

*The language of the apostles condemns imposture and deception, instead of being the organ of lies.*

**B**UT why is it necessary to employ reasoning, where seeing only suffices? the words of the apostles condemn liars, so far are they from being the organ of lies. Ananias dares to say to St. Peter, that the money which he lays at his feet, is the full value of the field he had sold, tho' he secretly retained a part. And St. Peter thunderstrikes him with these terrible words: "Why hath Satan  
" filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost?  
" why hast thou conceived this thing in thine  
" heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but un-  
" to God. And Ananias hearing these words,  
" fell down and gave up the ghost." His wife to whom this punishment was unknown, comes some hours after: she was an accomplice in the fraud of her husband, and she answers the questions put to her by St. Peter, with as little sincerity. And then that apostle speaks to her thus: "How is it that ye have  
" agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the  
" Lord? Behold, the feet of them which  
" have buried thy husband are at the door,  
" and shall carry thee out. Then fell she  
" down straightway at his feet, and yielded  
" up the ghost: and the young men came in,  
" and



**PART** "and found her dead, and carrying her forth;  
**III.** "buried her by her husband. And great fear  
 "came upon all the church, and upon as  
 "many as heard of these things."

Has there ever been any example of the like nature? could God have evidenced in a more public manner, that his Holy Spirit was in the apostles; that this Spirit of truth of which they were full, could not bear falsehood; and that their words, which were consecrated to him, destroyed liars, whilst they gave life to the faithful?

St. Paul had received, as well as St. Peter, the power of punishing in the same manner disobedience and rebellion: \* but he acknowledges, that he had no power, but for the interest of truth: wherefore we cannot listen with too great a respect, to what he says to us in the person of the Thessalonians. † "For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile; but as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts. ‡ "For our rejoicing is this, says he to the Corinthians, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-wards. || "For we are not as many, which corrupt the word

\* And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience.  
 2 Cor. x. 6 For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth. 2 Cor. xiii. 8.

† 1 Thess. ii. 3.

‡ 2 Cor. i. 12.

|| Ibid. ii. 17.

“ word of God : but as of sincerity, but as of CHAR.  
 “ God, in the sight of God, speak we in XIII.  
 “ Christ.” ~

## ARTICLE VIII.

*Before we suspect them of falsity, we  
 ought first to prove the falsity of their  
 miracles, whose certainty is evident.*

**I** Examine not yet the miracles which the apostles wrought to attest the verity of their doctrine. But I ought to inform those who doubt of their sincerity, that they must in the first place prove the falsity of their miracles, or at least demonstrate, that they have no certainty. But how will they go about to prove this ? do they understand well what they have to oppose ? have they considered all the circumstances ? will they leave no part of the history of the acts of the apostles without attacking it ? what part soever they retain, will it not necessarily recall to mind all the rest ? will they venture to deny the miraculous cure of the lame man, who was asking an alms at the gate of the temple, and was the occasion that the Jews imprisoned Peter and John ? Will they pretend that these apostles never did appear before the council of the priests and elders ? there must, at this rate, be nothing at all true : all will be fiction, the apostles themselves must never have been, and the christian religion must have established itself in an unaccountable

PART accountable manner, and later impostors must  
 III. have forged a history, the facts of which  
 never had a being. Such extravagances as  
 these have elsewhere † been treated as they  
 deserved, and we need not repeat what has  
 been said already on this subject.

I suppose then, that it is at least indubitable, that St. Peter and St. John appeared before the council-seat of the priests and elders, who forbade them with great menaces to speak of Christ in any sort whatsoever, and to whomsoever; and that these apostles answered, as mentioned in the Acts: ‡ “Whether  
 “it be right in the sight of God, to hearken  
 “unto you more than unto God, judge ye.  
 “For we cannot but speak the things which  
 “we have seen and heard.” Such an answer, wherein wisdom and courage equally display themselves, is sufficient to convince me of their sincerity. In such circumstances, hypocrisy could never have preserved such dignity, and intrepidity, with so much modesty. She would have said too much, or too little. And there is nothing but truth entrusted to a good conscience, that is capable of so wise a medium.

The twelve apostles led to the tribunal, made the same answer, that they ought rather to obey God than man; and they maintained it by a discourse, whereof these are the first words: \* “The God of our fathers, raised up,  
 “Jesus

† In the whole third chapter, and in the 8th article of the 7th chapter.

‡ Acts iv. 19, &c.

\* Acts v. 30.



“ Jesus, whom ye slew, and hanged on a CHAP.  
 “ tree.” What a resolution! and what a con- XIII.  
 trast betwixt these two things: *you have cru-*  
*fied Jesus: and the God of our fathers hath*  
*raised him again!* How convinced must they  
 have been of the truth, to speak it thus in the  
 presence of persons whom it drove into fury  
 and madness? How assured must they have  
 been, that the ignominy of the cross was ap-  
 parent only, and that it was the means of sal-  
 vation to say without a blush, that Christ raised  
 to life by his Father, had been nailed to the  
 cross by men. These very apostles having  
 been condemned to be scourged by the coun-  
 cil: \* “ They departed from the presence  
 “ of the council, rejoicing that they were  
 “ counted worthy to suffer shame for his  
 “ name.” Admirable expression! which shews  
 not only patience and courage, but triumph:  
 which proves not only the faith of the apostles,  
 but their gratitude and love of Christ: which  
 not only wipes off the shame of punishment,  
 but represents it as a recompence and distin-  
 ction of honour. How strongly do such sen-  
 timents, which were common to the apostles  
 and their disciples, confound those who suspect  
 them of fraud and imposture? and of what  
 chastisement are not those worthy, who after  
 such glaring proofs of the apostles candour, will  
 still suspect them of insincerity.

C H A P.

Acts v. 41.

## PART

## III.

## CHAP. XIV.

The truth and certainty of the ascension of Christ to heaven, where he is seated at the right hand of God. The union of the principal parts and circumstances of this mystery, and their relation with other indubitable facts, demonstrate invincibly its verity. The accomplishment of the predictions of Christ to his apostles, before he ascended into heaven, shews that he ascended thither. The ascension of Christ foretold by the prophets, and accomplished as they had foretold. The injustice of those, who require that he should have had other witnesses besides his disciples. Particular proofs of the sincerity of the apostles, in relation to this mystery. The impossibility that they should have invented the predictions and promises of Christ, which are essentially connected with his ascension. New proofs, that they have added nothing neither to the essential part, nor to the circumstances, and that it was impossible they should feign them. Modesty of the evangelists infinitely opposite to fiction and falsehood. Modesty of the apostles and evangelists, joined to an ardent zeal for the glory of Christ. Difference in the authors of the new testament, when they speak of the ascension of Christ as historians, and when they instruct the faithful in the sublimity of this mystery. Such a difference is a great proof of truth. The lively and deep impression which the certainty of Christ's being in heaven, and of his descending one day from thence, made on the apostles and their disciples.

ARTICLE I.

*The union of the principal circumstances of this mystery, and their relation with other indubitable facts, demonstrate invincibly its verity.*

THE ascension of Christ to heaven is a necessary consequence of his resurrection. For the natural place of a body invested with glory and immortality is heaven. And it is highly probable, that were it not for the love which Christ bore his disciples, whose faith he was willing to establish, and for the affection he had for his church, whose foundation and discipline he wanted to settle and regulate himself, it is highly probable, I say, he would have left the earth the very moment he rose from the tomb. But as he would not have his ascension kept secret, it is our interest to collect its proofs, which add a new degree of evidence and certainty to those of his resurrection, and prepare us for new discoveries.

Before Christ ascended into heaven in the presence of his disciples, \* he shewed himself the last time at Jerusalem in a place where they were assembled, and at the time they were at table. He condescended to sit down with

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them,

\* And being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem. Acts i. 4. Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat. Mark xvi. 14. Even to us, who did eat and drink with him, after he rose from the dead. Acts x. 41.



PART them, to persuade them more efficaciously of  
 III. the truth of his resurrection, and to furnish  
 them with convincing proofs for those whom  
 they were to instruct, to whom they would  
 have a right to say, that they had eat and  
 drunk with him after he rose from the dead.

During the repast he said many important  
 things to them, which probably were repeated  
 † in the place where he ascended into heaven.  
 This place is the mountain of Olives, near  
 the village of Bethany, \* whither St. Luke  
 says that our Lord conducted his apostles after  
 the repast, by rendering himself visible to  
 them during the way, or contenting himself  
 with appointing the place, and ordering them  
 to meet him there.

When they were come thither, he confirm-  
 ed to them what he had before said: ‡ “All  
 “ power is given unto me in heaven and in  
 “ earth. Go ye therefore and teach all na-  
 “ tions, baptizing them in the name of the  
 “ Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy  
 “ Ghost; teaching them to observe all things  
 “ whatsoever I have commanded you.”

|| “ He that believeth and is baptized, shall  
 “ be saved; but he that believeth not, shall  
 “ be damned. And these signs shall follow  
 “ them that believe: in my name shall they  
 “ cast out devils; they shall speak with new  
 “ tongues,

† This conjecture is founded on what St. Luke says in the  
 first chapter of the Acts.

And he led them out as far as Bethany. Luke xxiv. 50.  
 Acts ii. 12.

‡ Mat. xxviii. 18,

‡ Mark xvi. 16.

“tongues, they shall take up serpents, and if  
“they drink any deadly thing, it shall not  
“hurt them, they shall lay hands on the sick,  
“and they shall recover.”

\* “And that repentance and remission of  
“sins should be preached in his name, among  
“all nations, beginning at Jerusalem: † and  
“commanded them that they should not de-  
“part from Jerusalem, but wait for the pro-  
“mise of the Father, which, saith he, ye  
“have heard of me. For John truly baptized  
“with water, but ye shall be baptized with  
“the Holy Ghost, not many days hence.”

“When they therefore were come together,  
“they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou  
“at this time restore again the kingdom to  
“Israel? And he said unto them, It is not  
“for you to know the times or the seasons,  
“which the Father hath put in his own  
“power. But ye shall receive power, after  
“that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and  
“ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Je-  
“rusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria,  
“and unto the utmost parts of the earth: ‡  
“and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the  
“end of the world.”

¶ “After these words, he lift up his hands  
“and blessed them. And it came to pass,  
“while he blessed them, he was parted from  
“them, and carried up into heaven: § and  
“while they beheld, a cloud received him  
“out of their sight.”

Q 2

“And

\* Acts i. 4, &c.  
xxviii. 20.

† Luke xxiv. 47.  
‖ Luke xxiv. 50.

‡ Matt.  
§ Acts i. 9.

PART

III.

“ And while they looked stedfastly toward  
 “ heaven as he went up, behold, two men  
 “ stood by them in white apparel, which also  
 “ said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gaz-  
 “ ing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which  
 “ is taken up from you into heaven, shall so  
 “ come in like manner as ye have seen him  
 “ go into heaven.”

† “ And they worshipped him, and return-  
 “ ed to Jerusalem with great joy. And were  
 “ continually in the temple, praising and blef-  
 “ sing God. Amen.”

These are the principal circumstances of the mystery, which I suppose those who hitherto have had some doubt about the main part, to have been witnesses to as well as myself, together with the other disciples. I desire them to tell me what they think of it, and whether they could have desired any thing more sensible and convincing. They have already seen Christ several times since his resurrection, whose apparitions as soon as they are believed to be real, and written with fidelity, are common to all those who are able to read them. They have really touched him with their hands; they have seen him eat; and they have eaten with him at the same table. But in this last repast, they have had full leisure to examine him. For it was at noon day, and not in the evening. They have heard him speak of his approaching ascension, and the consequences it was to have. They have received orders from him, to meet him on mount Olivet, and to stop at the nearest place

to



to Bethany, and he himself conducted them. CHAP.  
How proper were those places, which were XIV.  
so well known and frequented during the life of Christ, to recall the remembrance of his actions, his miracles, and his sufferings? Could they forget at Bethany the resurrection of Lazarus, who without doubt was present? could his sisters Mary and Martha be deceived in him, who had raised him from the dead? did not Peter, James, and John, recollect on the mountain of Olives, the place where Christ laid so long prostrate before his heavenly Father in prayer; and where he had voluntarily submitted himself to his enemies? and did they not admire that this should be the very place, which Christ chose to ascend to the right hand of his Father? did not all this contribute to make the resurrection of Christ be considered as real as his sufferings, and as certain, tho' of another nature, as that of Lazarus; and to prove that he was, immortality excepted, intirely the same, as he who had been so often seen upon that mountain, and at Bethany?

Had he not known our weakness, he might have raised himself rapidly in the air, and disappeared like lightning. But he spoke a considerable time to his disciples assembled. He answered their questions. He blessed them, holding his hands raised over them, and recommending them to his heavenly Father, in terms very near the same as those which we read in the seventeenth chapter of St. John. And whilst he blesses them, he is insensibly raised towards heaven, and thus at-

PART tracts their eyes in such a manner, as renders

III.  at length a beautiful cloud, which serves him as a chariot, covers and steals him from their sight : but this cloud continued for some time rising before their eyes : and the disciples becoming as it were motionless by such an amazing spectacle, would have continued to fix their eyes on heaven, had not two angels awaked them from this kind of extasy and ravishment, by telling them that Christ would return as he had ascended, and that he would no longer render himself visible to men, but in order to judge them.

Let those who waver in faith, examine well these circumstances. The spectators are in great numbers : for according to the history of St. \* Luke, those who returned from Mount Olivet to Jerusalem, and prepared themselves for the coming of the Holy Ghost, were in number about six score, and these were perhaps only a part of the witnesses. The mountain is visible to them all. The day is clear, and serene. Two angels attest what human eyes could not see, but was a consequence of what they had seen. They say that Christ ascended to heaven, not to descend again till the last day. And who could better deserve to be credited in this point, than the citizens of heaven ? the disciples thus penetrated with a spiritual joy, arising from the certainty of the glory of their master, and their hope of a share in it, pour forth themselves in thanksgivings,

givings, and pass whole days in prayer. Who can hesitate in his faith after such proofs? and what can we look for, if such testimonies be not sufficient?

CHAP.  
XIV.

ARTICLE II.

*The accomplishment of the predictions of Christ to his apostles, before he ascends to heaven, demonstrates his ascension.*

**B**UT let us examine the thing closer. Christ said many things to his disciples: let us ask them, whether these things have had effect. He promised them the Holy Ghost: have they received it? have they been baptized by fire, according to his prophecy? have they preached publicly repentance, and remission of sins in his name, beginning at Jerusalem, proceeding thorough Judea, passing afterwards to Samaria, and in fine, to the extremities of the world, as he commanded them? have they done it with success? have they been able to persuade both Jews and Gentiles of his doctrine? have they experienced the succour he promised them, and has experience confirmed what he had declared to them concerning his unlimited power in heaven and earth? have they wrought the miracles that were to be the signs and proofs of faith? and have they



PART. communicated this power to those, who listened

III. to them with docility? has the church which they founded, resisted the power of men and devils? and has Christ kept his word of being its protector? If all this had its rise merely in the imagination of the apostles, I consent that Christ's ascension, which is essentially connected with these points, be looked upon as uncertain, or even as false. But if all has happened as he foretold and promised, when he ascended into heaven, it is as impossible to doubt of the ascension of Christ, as of the preaching and success of the apostles: and such a doubt would be as ill grounded, as that of the real existence of the Christian church.

### ARTICLE III.

*The ascension of Christ foretold by the prophets, and accomplished as they had foretold.*

LET us, however, put the whole subject in the strongest point of light. † There are prophecies which foretell that the Messiah shall be seated at the right hand of God, until all his enemies are become his footstool; that he shall ascend to heaven, leading with him those captives whom he has delivered; that he shall enter in triumph; and that the an-

† Psalm 109. Ps. 67. Ps. 23.

cient citizens of heaven shall be astonished at his arrival. CHAP. XIV.

These prophecies, independently of their application to Christ, must have their accomplishment: the Messiah must ascend to heaven, whilst upon earth he will have many enemies, who will not believe in him; and his triumph must be less glorious in regard of men, than of angels. It must be at the same time indubitable and secret: it must have witnesses and opposers. Now let us chuse such circumstances as shall appear the most proper to reconcile these two opposite extremes, and then let us judge, whether the divine Wisdom has not infinitely better succeeded than all human prudence, in reconciling and uniting them.

#### ARTICLE IV.

*The injustice of those, who would wish he had other witnesses besides his disciples.*

WHAT has been said in another place, against the sentiment of those who wish that Christ had shewn himself in public after his resurrection, exempts me here from the trouble of combating the same idea in regard of his ascension. I shall content myself here with only reminding those, who would fain make a public spectacle of the mysteries of religion, that they little know the depth of the wound made by curiosity, which Christ

**PART** Christ came to cure and not to foment and  
**III.** further increase; that they lay too great a  
 stress upon the force of external miracles in the  
 conversion of men, which of themselves have  
 but a transient effect, incapable without grace  
 of changing the heart; that they thus put  
 faith upon a level with the senses, or rather  
 that they prefer the conviction of sense, tho'  
 there is no merit in opening the eyes, and yet  
 there is a great one in subjecting our minds  
 to things that are certain tho' invisible: that  
 they thus refuse to God the sacrifice most  
 essentially due to him, as to the sovereign  
 Truth, by not contenting themselves with his  
 word, or the proofs he has given, but still  
 finding a difficulty of believing his authority  
 alone; in fine, that they confound the times,  
 desiring that Christ should manifest himself be-  
 fore his last coming, and strike his enemies  
 with the blaze of his glory; or rather that he  
 should have no enemies, by rendering all man-  
 kind faithful, by the evidence of his mysteries,  
 and by the presence of his majesty.

## ARTICLE V.

*Particular proofs of the sincerity of the  
 evangelists and apostles in relation to  
 this mystery.*

**I**T would be shameful, methinks, after the  
 ignominy with which those who suspect  
 the apostles of a design of deceiving, have  
 been



been justly covered, to declare ourselves for so odious a party. But without thinking any one capable of so base a suspicion, let us not omit to corroborate our first reflections by some others, which will convince us more and more that the apostles had no design of deceiving us.

Had they formed this design, would they have chosen for that spectacle, Bethany, and the mount of Olives, near to Jerusalem, where no one had seen any thing of this nature, and where it was so easy a matter to prove that there had been no such assembly? Would they have determined the number of spectators? Would they have collected them in the same house at Jerusalem, to wait there for the coming of the Holy Ghost? If none of them came from the mount of Olives, and none of them had any knowledge of the promise of the Holy Ghost, nor of the manner in which they were to prepare themselves; would they have fixed to a short term, and to the very day of Pentecost, the accomplishment of such a promise, accompanied with great prodigies, of which all Jerusalem were to be witnesses: especially when the falsity of these fictions must have been so notorious, and easy to be demonstrated? Would it not have been more natural to have chosen a more secret place, a mountain in the desert, a retired solitude: to call thither fewer witnesses; and not to join the ascension of Christ with near and public events, such as must necessarily have been known to all Jerusalem?

## ARTICLE VI.

*The impossibility of their having invented the predictions and promises of Christ, which are essentially connected with his ascension.*

**B**UT waving all this, how will they reconcile what Christ says a moment before his ascension, with a formed design of deceiving? For they must have invented it, either before they preached to the Jews and Gentiles, or after the success of the gospel. If it was before their predication, by what light could they foresee the faith of all nations, and the conversion of the universe? How could they promise themselves so sure a protection from Christ, whom they knew neither to be risen, nor ascended to heaven? And by what legerdemain did they hope to persuade mankind, that they had the gift of working miracles, and the power of communicating it? If it was after the event, that the evangelists imagined the ascension of Christ and the words they attribute to him, I should be glad to know what was the subject of the predication of the apostles before these fictions were concerted? What said they of Christ either to the Jews or Gentiles? And how could they persuade either the one or the other, that he was seated at the right hand of God, and would come again to judge all men, before they thought of feigning it?

A R-

ARTICLE VII.

*New proofs, that they added nothing either to the substance or circumstances, and that it was impossible they should invent them.*

THE most obstinate incredulity ought to yield to such an evidence. But independent of these proofs, the weight of which seems to me irresistible, there are others, which people of sound understandings, and lovers of truth, ought to respect. Would men, who had a design of deceiving, and had taken the liberty to invent; would they, I say, ever have imagined the answer Christ gave to those, who asked of him if he would soon establish the kingdom of Israel? “ ’Tis not for you to know the times and the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.” Would this answer, so opposite to those prejudices which his disciples had even to that moment retained, and which were so contrary to their expectation of an external and glorious kingdom; would this answer, I say, have ever entered into their minds?

If they had invented the apparition of the two angels, would they have contented themselves with making them speak so few words? “ Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into



PART "into heaven." These words are admirably  
 III. exact, and contain what is precisely necessary.  
 But falshood speaks no such language.

## ARTICLE VIII.

*Modesty of the evangelists infinitely  
 opposite to fiction and lies.*

THE apostles and evangelists seem to have known \* that Christ carried with him to heaven in triumph the just who had died in former ages, and remained in the captivity of death. How comes it then, that the evangelists pass over in silence a circumstance so proper to set off the ascension of Christ? How comes it that men who were acquainted with this fact, did not make the most artful use of it, if they had the design of deceiving? How comes it, that thinking of nothing but what was extraordinary and marvellous, they content themselves with a simple plain stile, worthy certainly of truth, but as opposite as it to lies? If we read the circumstances of this narrative, we shall be equally astonished at what it contains, and what it excludes. And every one will acknowledge that it is not possible, I do not say to invent any thing of this nature, but

\* Wherefore he saith, when he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended into the lower parts of the earth. Eph. iv. 8 & 9.

to express it in a manner so proper to nourish CHAP. XIV.  
piety and faith, and so contrary to curiosity,  
vanity, and the reflections of human wisdom?

But this very narrative is so little the effect of study and art, that we must combine several passages scattered in the evangelists, to render it complete; because not one of them mentions all; and some take no notice of the ascension, as St. John and St. Matthew; or hint only a word or two, as St. Mark. The brevity of this last apostle is wonderful. \* "So then after the Lord " had spoken unto them, he was received up " into heaven, and sat at the right hand of " God." And no other proofs are necessary to men, capable of discerning the characters of truth and falsehood, to persuade them, that the evangelists are not only sincere, but have been conducted by a more than human wisdom, independent of human assistance, and expected the whole success from God, to whom they referred all the glory.

St. Mark, whom I have just mentioned, after having specified the prodigies which those should work who believed in Christ, according to the promise which he himself had made to his apostles, finishes thus his gospel. "And † they went forth, and preached every " where, the Lord working with them, and " confirming the word with signs following." Great and unexampled modesty! Who is it that could have prevailed upon himself to relate thus

\* Mark xvi. 19.

† The apostles.

**PART** thus a multitude of miracles, which proved in  
**III.** so magnificent and divine a manner the truth  
 of the promises of Christ, his omnipotence,  
 and power over heaven and earth? Who  
 could have inspired men, so full of zeal for  
 him, and so passionate for his glory, with such  
 a reserve? Who persuaded them, that so few  
 words would suffice to subject even the most  
 rebellious hearts? Who can imagine this lan-  
 guage to be the voice of imposture? Is there  
 any example amongst men of such an unaffected  
 sincerity, a sincerity so negligent of its own  
 advantages, and so indifferent in appearance  
 with regard to the credit which it deserves and  
 expects.

## ARTICLE IX.

*The modesty of the apostles and evange-  
 lists, joined with an ardent zeal for  
 the glory of Christ. Difference in  
 the authors of the books of the new  
 testament, when they speak of the as-  
 cension of Christ as historians, and  
 when they instruct the faithful in the  
 sublimity of this mystery. Such a  
 difference is a great mark of truth.*

**T**HIS astonishing simplicity and candour,  
 and this seeming indifference, are joined,  
 as we have observed elsewhere, in the same  
 men,



men, together with the warmest zeal and most ardent love. The very evangelists who mention only a few words of the ascension of

CHAP.

XIV.

Christ, or even omit it in their writings, have no other object but his glory, and have the highest idea of him, adoring him and causing him to be adored as equal with the Father, and as seated at his right hand: and they have all of them the same sentiments as St. Paul, who teaches nothing peculiar to himself, when he says to the Ephesians: \* “ I pray to God, “ that the eyes of your understanding being “ enlightened, ye may know what is the “ hope of his calling, and what the riches of “ the glory of his inheritance in the saints; “ and what is the exceeding greatness of his “ power to us-ward who believe, according to “ the working of his mighty power, which “ he wrought in Christ when he raised him “ from the dead, and set him at his own right “ hand in the heavenly places. Far above all “ principality, and power, and might, and “ dominion, and every name that is named, “ not only in this world, but also in that which “ is to come. And hath put all things under “ his feet, and gave him to be the head over all “ things to the church.” And in his epistle to the Philippians: † “ He humbled himself, “ and became obedient unto death, even the “ death of the cross. Wherefore God also “ hath highly exalted him, and given him a “ name which is above every name: that at

VOL. II.

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“ the

\* Eph. i. 18.

† Philip. ii. 8, &c.

PART “ the name of Jesus every knee should bow,  
 III. “ of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth,  
 “ and *things* under the earth : and that every  
 “ tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is  
 “ Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

This is what the apostles and evangelists were full of, and what they taught in sublime words, when they instructed those, who were already believers, in the depth of the mysteries of the resurrection and ascension of Christ. But they contented themselves to relate them in a short and simple manner, when they wrote for the whole world ; following in this a method quite opposite to those seducers, who seek to gain credit by pompous fictions, and place their hope in a false lustre, having nothing afterwards either grave or moving to say to those whom they have deluded : because their vanity is then satisfied, and their conscience, whose secret voice they cannot intirely stifle, opposes too strongly their hypocrisy.

We experience quite the contrary in reading the writings of the apostles : for in proportion as they find people's minds more religiously disposed, and more weaned from themselves and the world, they shew them, in a stronger manner, what share they have in the resurrection and ascension of Christ, and how solid a foundation these two mysteries are of their comfort and hope ; because then they speak to their brethren and friends, and can with security pour forth their own hearts into the bosom of their disciples. \* “ But God who is  
 “ rich

\* Eph. ii. 4, &c.

“ rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith CHAP.  
“ he loved us. Even when we were dead in XIV.  
“ sins, hath quickened us together with Christ,  
“ (by grace ye are saved). And hath raised  
“ us up together, and made us *fit* together in  
“ heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in ages  
“ to come he might shew the exceeding riches  
“ of his grace, in his kindness towards us,  
“ through Christ Jesus. For by grace ye are  
“ saved, through faith, and that not of your-  
“ selves: it is the gift of God, not of works,  
“ lest any man should boast. For we are his  
“ workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto  
“ good works, which God hath before ordain-  
“ ed, that we should walk in them.” All  
this discourse so sublime and moving, inspires  
nothing but sincerity, truth, persuasion, love,  
and gratitude for Christ and his Father, who  
has raised us again, and placed us in heaven,  
in the person of his Son, who is our head, and  
represents us all. One must be quite insen-  
sible to every thing, to confound a language so  
proper for truth, with that of dissimulation  
and hypocrisy. But what we have recited is  
repeated under different forms in all the writ-  
ings of the apostles. And when we read  
them with care, we meet with nothing but  
Christ suffering, and risen again: in humilia-  
tion, or glory: hid in the bosom of his Fa-  
ther, or ready to appear and judge mankind.



PART  
III.

## ARTICLE X.

*The lively and deep impression, which the certainty of Christ's being in heaven, and of his future descent from thence, had made upon the apostles and their disciples.*

WE have seen in the preceding chapter what St. Paul wrote to the Philippians: \* "For our conversation is in heaven, " from whence also we look for the Saviour, " the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change " our vile body, that it may be like unto his " glorious body, according to the working " whereby he is able even to subdue all things " unto himself." This habit of dwelling in heaven by thought and desire, and of expecting Christ's descent from thence, who was gone before us as our precursor and high-priest, to prepare a place for us, was a thing common to all christians, and formed, as it were, their peculiar and proper character. † "For from you, says St. Paul to the Thessalonians, founded out the word of the Lord, " not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also " in every place, your faith to God-ward is " spread abroad, so that we need not to speak " any thing. For they themselves shew of " us,

\* Phil. iii. 20.

† 1 Thess. i. 8.

“ us, what manner of entring in we had un-CHAP.  
“ to you, and how ye turned to God from XIV.  
“ idols, to serve the living and true God. And  
“ to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he  
“ raised from the dead, even Jesus, which de-  
“ livered us from the wrath to come.” To  
believe in God, and wait for his Son from  
heaven, was the whole christian life, at least  
an abridgment of it ; and these duties were the  
foundation of all the rest. † “ Seeing then  
“ that all these things shall be dissolved, says  
St. Peter to all the faithful, “ what manner of  
“ persons ought ye to be in all holy conversa-  
“ tion and godliness ; looking for and hastening  
“ unto the coming of the day of God ?”

Do we justly know such masters and disci-  
ples, when we suspect the former of being  
seducers, and the others of being seduced ?  
Tell me, do not the first, by several strokes of  
their character, resemble men without probity  
and conscience ? and the others, whose life is  
celestial, and attached to nothing earthly, have  
they not evidently the marks of people de-  
ceived, who are intirely taken up with frivo-  
lous things, and surmount every sentiment of  
nature, by a patience triumphant over all ob-  
stacles, without having any real support, any  
well-grounded hope, any solid comfort, any  
other strength, than an over-heated deluded  
imagination ?

† 2 Pet. iii. 11.

## C H A P. XV.

*The truth of the resurrection and ascension of Christ to heaven, and of his supreme authority, clearly proved by the descent of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost. Certainty of the miracles, which happened that day. Difference between this mystery and those, which had only for witnesses the disciples of Christ. It is a proof of the latter, and ought to have been public. Observations that prepare us to look upon the descent of the Holy Ghost on the apostles, as certain. If the descent of the Holy Ghost be certain, all is certain in regard to Christ. The miraculous gift of tongues confirmed beyond contradiction the certainty of the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the apostles. The sudden fortitude of the apostles, is a second and manifest proof of the descent of the Holy Ghost. The sublime knowledge which the apostles have of the scriptures, and was given them at the same instant, is a third evident proof of the descent of the Holy Ghost.*



ARTICLE I.

*Difference between this mystery and those which had only the disciples of Christ for their witnesses. It is a proof of the latter, and ought to have been public.*

**H**itherto the proofs of the resurrection of Christ, and his ascension to heaven, have been confined to his disciples; and tho' they be convincing, yet they depended on their testimony. The public could learn nothing, but by them: they could judge of nothing from themselves, and they may be supposed to have had a secret uneasiness in being only permitted to listen, and not to see. But they are now going to be satisfied: they shall see, and understand: and they shall themselves be witnesses of all, if the promises which Christ has made to his disciples in ascending to heaven \* be effectual: or at least they will become judges of the want of solidity in those promises, if the effect be unknown. For it is impossible, that his apostles should be invest-  
R 4 ed

\* For if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you: but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. Of sin, because they believe not me. Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye shall see me no more. Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. John xvi. 7. Acts i. 5.

**PART** ed with a divine virtue, and changed into other  
**III.** men by the baptism of fire, without this being  
 externally visible. And it is still less possible,  
 that they should convince the world in a public manner, that Christ their master had been crucified by the crimes and iniquity of man; that the devil by this very iniquity of which he was the instigator, is going to be banished from the empire he had usurped: and that Christ is returned to the bosom of his Father to reign perpetually with him: 'tis, I say, less possible they should convince the world of these three capital points, in such a manner as to leave no doubt (as they had been promised) without working great wonders, and without becoming themselves miraculous men. The secret in this case would have been suspected. An unknown mystery can never serve as a proof of another mystery. And things were brought to that crisis, that the apostles were not only to say: We have seen: but, See yourselves. Their master has left them, after having promised them another Comforter, † a supernatural power, superior both to the world and the devil. He forbade them to expose themselves to danger, before he had sent them his Spirit from heaven: and he enjoined them to fear none, when they had received it. The event must decide the point, and we have only to wait for it.

## ARTICLE

† John xiv. 16.

ARTICLE II.

*Observations, which prepare us to look upon the event of the coming of the Holy Ghost as certain.*

**I** Behold the apostles preparing themselves by silence and prayer, tho' they are thoroughly persuaded of the truth and certainty of the promises made them. And such a preparation not only proves their sincerity, but their religion, and convinces me of the knowledge they had of the value and importance of what they expected. I observe likewise, that they are not alone, and do not affect secrecy. For they have with them many witnesses, who hope, and ask of God, as well as they, the spirit of truth and fortitude, and who will have a right to make a deposition of what they have seen. I observe further, that St. Peter proposes to the assembly to chuse from amongst the ancient disciples, a man who may fill up the place of Judas, and bear witness with them of the resurrection of Christ. And all this confirms me in the thought that they absolutely depend on his promises, and that they dispose themselves seriously to serve him, as witnesses and preachers throughout the whole world.

ARTICLE



PART  
III.

## ARTICLE III.

*If the descent of the Holy Ghost be certain, all is certain relating to Christ.*

**B**UT the reflection which seems to me most important, and in which every one must join with me, is, that if the Holy Ghost really descended on the apostles, as they expected, we cannot attribute this but to Christ, who promised it to them in express terms : \*  
 “ And I will pray the Father, and he shall  
 “ give you another Comforter, that he may  
 “ abide with you for ever. I will not have  
 “ you orphans.” And in stronger terms : †  
 “ It is expedient for you that I go away : for  
 “ if I go not away, the Comforter will not  
 “ come unto you : but if I depart, I will send  
 “ him unto you :” Christ himself will therefore send him, and will not be content with entreating his Father to send him. It will be therefore as evident, that Christ reigns in heaven, with the same power as his Father, as it is evident, that the Comforter is come. This we are to expect, because the decision of all depends on it.

We know how the event has answered the promises. The history is written in the acts of the apostles. And the proof, that Christ is living, seated at the right hand of his Father,

\* John xiv, 16.

† John xvi, 7.

ther, and invested with the same authority and power, is absolutely complete.

CHAP. XV.

## ARTICLE IV.

*First proof: the miraculous gift of tongues confirms beyond contradiction the certainty of the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the apostles.*

LET us not slightly pass over an event of this importance; but see how it is related in scripture. † “And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed, and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans? And how hear we every

† Acts ii. 1, &c

PART

III.

“ every man in our own tongue, wherein we  
 “ were born? Parthians, and Medes, and Ela-  
 “ mites. .We do hear them speak in our tongues  
 “ the wonderful works of God. And they  
 “ were all amazed, and were in doubt, say-  
 “ ing one to another, What meaneth this?  
 “ Others mocking, said, These men are full of  
 “ new wine. But Peter standing up with the  
 “ eleven, lift up his voice, and said unto them,  
 “ Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell at  
 “ Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and  
 “ hearken to my words: for these are not  
 “ drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the  
 “ third hour of the day. But this is that  
 “ which is spoken by the prophet Joel. And  
 “ it shall come to pass in the last days (saith  
 “ God) I will pour out of my Spirit upon all  
 “ flesh. . . And on my servants, and on my  
 “ handmaidens, I will pour out in those days of  
 “ my Spirit, and they shall prophesy. Ye men  
 “ of Israel, hear these words, Jesus of Naza-  
 “ reth, a man approved of God among you,  
 “ by miracles, wonders, and signs, which God  
 “ did by him in the midst of you, as ye your-  
 “ selves also know. Him being delivered by  
 “ the determinate counsel, and fore-knowledge  
 “ of God, ye have taken, and by wicked  
 “ hands have crucified and slain: whom God  
 “ hath raised up, having loosed the pains of  
 “ death. This same Jesus hath God raised up,  
 “ whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore  
 “ being by the right hand of God exalted, and  
 “ having received of the Father the promise  
 “ of



“ of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, CHAP.  
“ which ye now see and hear . . . . Therefore XV.  
“ let all the house of Israel know assuredly,  
“ that God hath made the same Jesus, whom  
“ ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

I appeal here to all those, who would have had Christ to have manifested himself publicly after his resurrection, to have shewn himself to all Jerusalem, to have reproached the priests, pharisees, and all those who had contributed to his death, with their blindness and crime, and to have lastly ascended to heaven in their presence; whether such a proof would not have been transient. Those who were absent would perhaps have doubted of it. And even those, who had been present at such a sight, would not have known to what a degree of glory Christ is exalted in heaven, what sort of equality he has with his Father, and with what power he communicates his Spirit to the church. But all this becomes clear and obvious, by the prodigy of which all the Jews are witnesses, and which will soon be witnessed by the whole world.

The impetuous wind which shook the house, and the tongues of fire, which visibly rested upon the heads of the disciples, without distinction of age or sex, are public signs of the internal effusion of the Holy Ghost, as well as symbols of his purity, activity, strength, and inward operation. His coming was therefore to be declared, to the end it might be certain, and that the outward marks should concur with the internal impression, to shew to the disciples,

PART ples, that the promise was accomplished, and  
 III. the hour of their mission was come.

~~~~~ In fact, they immediately go out from the place where they were shut up, and not being able to contain that ardor, which they were full of, they publish aloud the wonders of God, but in such a new, astonishing manner, and so like to the inspiration of the prophets, that every one ran to so surprizing a spectacle. And as there were then at Jerusalem Jews from all countries, whom the feast of Pentecost had drawn together, they all hear in their native tongues, what the disciples preach, because these disciples being in great number, changed frequently their language, so that every nation might take part in those thanksgivings which they paid to God, and the praises they gave to his infinite goodness.

It would be foreign to our purpose to examine strictly here, on which side to place this miracle, whether on the side of the disciples, who spake really different languages, or on that of the strange Jews, who heard several distinctly, tho' the disciples used none but their country tongue. The miracle would still be amazing, in what manner soever we explain it. But I suppose at present, it was in the disciples, reserving the proof thereof to another place, and even the raileries of those who accused them of being drunk, and speaking without sense or reason, are an incontestable proof of it. For they shew, that there were Jews who comprehended nothing of what they said, whilst others understood them perfectly well.
 And

And there is a probability, that these Jews CHAP.
were of Jerusalem, who had no knowledge of XV.
foreign tongues.

What deserves at present our attention, is the astonishment of so many Jews and profelytes, who are assembled from all parts of the world, of which they are as it were an epitome, and who in an extasy of wonder cry out to one another: "Behold, are not all these
" which speak Galileans? and how hear we
" every man in our tongue, wherein we were
" born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites,
" and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia.
" Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and the
" parts of Lybia, about Cyrene, and strangers
" of Rome, Jews and profelytes, Cretes and
" Arabians, we do hear them speak in our
" tongues the wonderful works of God."

What is the meaning of this prodigy? was there ever in reality since the general confusion of tongues, which was the punishment of the pride of man, a prodigy more astonishing, less capable of being darkened, less dependent on human power, or more surpassing all the power of delusion and artifice? Could these Jews of all countries, and of all nations, who were but lately arrived at Jerusalem, could they, I say, be supposed to be gained over by the apostles? could they concert together any thing like this? can they be suspected by the most sceptical incredulity? did they so much as personally know one another? could they communicate mutually their thoughts, without an interpreter?

but

were

PART were they not equally strangers to one another? is not their number above suspicion? and
 III. is there not an equal astonishment in all?

Nothing therefore can be more real than the miracle which astonishes them; but how many miracles does this one miracle contain? what master could have instructed in a moment the disciples of Christ in so many languages, so different in pronunciation, and genius? who is it that united together in their memories such a multiplicity of new words with distinct ideas? who is it that in the midst of so many languages, which had been suddenly infused, makes them chuse out exactly the proper one, without confounding or mixing it with others? who could make them pass so rapidly from one to the other? and preserve in them all so much strength and energy, such sublimity and eloquence, to celebrate the wonders of God? In the confusion of tongues, God blotted out of the memories of several, the ideas of the first language, which had been common to all, and introduced new ones, instead of one universal language: whereas now in an instant he forms in the memory of the disciples the characters of several new tongues, which subsist with the old, or original one; and what can we desire further, to be satisfied that it is he himself who inspires them with the use, and furnishes them with the subject-matter?

To deny this prodigy, we must deny all the facts that were the consequences of it. We must deny the sermon of St. Peter, to have been
 been

been spoken : we must deny the conversion of CHAP.
those who heard him : deny the birth of the XV.
church of Christ at Jerusalem : deny the won-
derful sanctity and disinterestedness of this
church : and after all this, deny likewise all the
truths in the epistles of St. Paul, wherein fre-
quent mention is made of the miraculous gifts of
the Holy Ghost, and especially of those written
to the Corinthians, where he says many things
of the gift of tongues : that is to say, to
disbelieve this fact, which is so necessarily
united with the rest, that are indubitable, we
must believe nothing at all ; and to believe no-
thing at all, we must attack every thing with-
out discretion or prudence, and by consequence
abandon all fixed reasoning.

ARTICLE V.

*Second proof : the sudden courage of
the apostles is a second manifest proof
of the descent of the Holy Ghost.*

BUT besides this open and manifest mi-
racle of the gift of tongues, which proves
that the promise made by Christ is ac-
complished, and that his Spirit is descended on
the disciples, their courage and resolution as-
tonish me no less, and permit me not to doubt,
but that they have been invested with that
power from on high, which they were order-
ed to wait for ; and have received that bap-
tism of fire, which was to inspire them with

PART a burning zeal for the glory of their master,
 III. and consume what they had remaining in
 them, of weakness and pusillanimity.

They all expose themselves without precaution, or farther consideration. They meet danger in the metropolis, on the most solemn day, in presence of a whole people. They preach clearly, and openly, the resurrection of Christ, and his supreme power in heaven, and upon earth: and they frequently repeat, that it is he whom the priests and elders have crucified. Has there been from the beginning of the world any thing of this nature? did it ever happen before or after, that truth was preached in this manner? was the ancient law thus published by men divinely inspired, in the midst of its enemies? by what model then did the disciples of Christ regulate themselves? on what did they depend? what success could they expect from their temerity? who could have foretold them that all would bend, and submit to their authority? who promised them, that their words should be as so many enflamed arrows, which would pierce the hearts of those who heard them, and communicate to them the same spirit, with which they themselves were animated.

But tell me, how were they themselves so suddenly changed into other men? How did they instantaneously pass from an extreme precaution and timidity, to a fortitude that seems to pass the bounds of rational courage? Who bid them on this day speak with so much zeal and resolution to the Jews of all nations, having

ing hid themselves and laid silent to this mo-
ment? What did they exercise themselves in
during their retreat, to become so bold and in-
trepid, so as to seem to challenge the greatest
dangers? But of what benefit could certain
essays or practices of this nature be to them of
in private? and how, having never spoken
before the great and wise of their nation upon
different subjects, could they have resolved to
declare to them openly, and to their face, that
they had crucified the Messiah expected by
their fathers, and that this Messiah was seated
at the right hand of the Almighty? It is evi-
dent they must have been actuated by a supe-
rior spirit, who is their light and fortitude, who
is sure of success, and whose power can sur-
mount all obstacles.

ARTICLE VI.

*Third proof: the knowledge, which the
apostles have of the scriptures, given
them in an instant, is a third evident
proof of the descent or coming of the
Holy Ghost.*

IT is impossible to be insensible of this mi-
racle, not only on account of the fortitude
and magnanimity with which God inspired
the disciples of Christ, but because of that
sublime knowledge which he gave them
of mysteries and scripture. For it is astonish-

PART ing to observe how readily they occur to
 III. St. Peter, who says nothing but what the
 rest had learnt under the same master. How
 does he penetrate the sense? with what
 perspicuity does he explain it? with what
 strength does he support the prophecy of
 Joel, whose accomplishment he demonstrates?
 he shews by the words of David, † that the
 Messiah was to die and rise again: that after
 his resurrection he was to ascend into heaven,
 and sit at the right hand of his Father, and
 from thence was to send his Spirit to his dis-
 ciples. And because some might wrest, and
 apply to David the prophet's sense whom he
 quotes, he shews by solid reasoning, that the
 true sense of that scripture cannot regard any
 other than the person of Christ, and not David;
 who was but his interpreter and prophet.

In another discourse, which he pronounced
 a little time after, and on a sudden occasion,
 he quoted other passages ‡ of scripture with the
 same light and discernment: and he added in
 general, that all the prophets from Samuel had
 no other object but Christ, and the my-
 steries which he accomplished. In a word,
 being prisoner with St. John, and cited before
 the most august court of the nation, he said
 aloud that Christ was that mysterious stone,
 || foretold by David and Isaiah, which the blind
 architects of their nation had refused, tho' it
 was

† He quotes the Psal. xv. and cix.

‡ Deut. xviii. 15. Gen. xii. 3. Acts. iii. 24.

|| Acts. iv. 11. Psal. cxvii. Isaiah xxviii.

was become the chief stone of the corner : that CHAP. XV.
it was by him alone we were to be saved ; and
that no other name was given by God to men
for the foundation of salvation.

Who would have expected such wisdom, and knowledge of the writings of the prophets, whose works are certainly the most difficult part of scripture ? Whence did these men without † learning and art, who scarce could understand what Christ said to them, tho' in plain terms, thus surprizingly gain so sublime and pure a light ? Who was their master, after the loss of Christ ? How happened it that their minds were thus opened, after they could no longer consult him ? Who made them see in all the prophets, the mysteries of his death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven ? Who made them remember what they had heard from him during his life, but had grossly misunderstood whilst he was with them ? And who discovered to them so many new truths, if they received not the Spirit of truth which had been promised them, and was to recal into their minds what they had forgot, and teach them all that would be salutary to them and the church ? Their very enemies are forced to acknowledge, this is beyond their comprehension, and has something extraordinary, considering this miracle of fortitude and wisdom is wrought in men who are known to be ignorant and illiterate.

† Unlearned and ignorant men, say the priests and senators of the Jews assembled. Acts iv. 13.

Continuation of the same subject, and proofs that the Holy Ghost really descended on the apostles on the day of Pentecost. Fourth proof: the miraculous docility of several Jews upon the preaching of the apostles. Fifth proof: the sudden and miraculous disinterestedness of the church of Jerusalem: the sudden perfection of that infant church. Sixth proof: the manifest and sensible accomplishment of what the prophets had foretold, in relation to an internal and new law. Seventh proof: wonderful relations of conformity and difference betwixt the ancient and new law, which demonstrate that the new began at the death of Christ, and received its perfection upon the mission of the Holy Ghost.

ARTICLE I.

Fourth proof: miraculous docility of several Jews upon the preaching of the apostles.

BUT let us leave the apostles for a moment, and see what the Spirit of God effects in those who listen to it; how it renders them docil; how it softens their hearts; and forms almost in an instant a new, humble, and faithful people, equally actuated by love and repentance; of that rude multitude, whose

whose ears and hearts were uncircumcised. One single sermon converts no less than three thousand. A second converts five thousand more. The christian religion spreads like a conflagration, and the church, which had been formerly barren, is astonished at her own fecundity. At each cast of his net, Peter renews the prodigy of the two miraculous draughts, and the choicest fishes hasten to be received into his boat.

Whence could such an astonishing success proceed; a success so contrary to all the ideas of those who had entertained such false notions of the Messiah, of divine justice, and salvation? How was it, that they so soon resolved to believe in him whom they had crucified, and who was condemned by the most learned, and most eminent part of their nation? How could the scandal of the cross be thus suddenly obliterated in their minds? Who revealed to them the high value of the sufferings and ignominies of Christ? Had the apostles preached to them a like doctrine some days before, how could they have gained attention, or what fruit could they have expected from their words, destitute of the efficacy of the Spirit of God? It is this divine Spirit that makes these very words reach the heart and soul. It is this that gives a success to the disciples, which the master himself had not in his own person, because it was not proper the world should receive the gift of the Holy Ghost until Christ was entered into his glory. And it is evident that all this is the effect

PART. effect of the following promise: * "I will

III. "pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh, and
 ~~~~~ "on my servants, and on my hand-maidens."

## ARTICLE II.

*Fifth proof: Sudden and miraculous  
 disinterestedness of the church of Je-  
 rusalem: the sudden perfection of  
 that infant church.*

**I**F those who listened to St. Peter and the apostles had contented themselves only with believing, the miracle would still have been incontestably great. But on a sudden they proceed to imitate the disinterestedness of the apostles. They leave, and sell what they have, and carry the price to the feet of those who had preached Christ to them. They all chuse to be equally poor, to depend equally on the care of providence, to retain no property, nor possessions. They are all one heart, and one soul. They employ their thoughts intirely in the expectation of future happiness. They live on praying and thanksgiving: they are become a nation of kings and priests, whose only care is to worship God, and spread abroad his religion, leaving to others the sollicitude of cultivating the earth, and gathering its fruits. Whence had they in so small a time so sublime a virtue? Whence had they this idea? Is it natural to find such a perfect disinterestedness in men, who saw in the scriptures none but temporal



temporal rewards, nor were affected with any thing but the love of present goods, or the fear of losing them? What made them so voluntarily abandon what was once so dear to them, or who discovered to them an unknown treasure, capable of producing so wonderful a change? Who is it that exalted them so on a sudden to the right hand of the Father, where Christ is seated in glory? Who is it that made them citizens of heaven? And who is it that infused such harmony and uniformity between them and the heavenly Spirit?

By what prodigy was self-love which divides mankind, and causes every man almost to make himself his own end and center, and regard the interests of others as opposite to his own; by what prodigy, I say, was it changed into so pure a charity; a charity so generous, and averse to those misunderstandings, which the difference and inequality of riches raise amongst mankind? What power could reform so many unjust and corrupt hearts, melt them down again, as it were, and convert them into one heart and one soul, without the external appearance of any other influence but the preaching of those whom the Holy Ghost inspired? What power but his could thus abridge the preparations and times, give perfection to the church even at its birth, and make it conceive, bring forth, and give a full maturity to so many just souls almost at one and the same instant?

It is impossible not to perceive in these prodigies (greater without doubt than all those which God had wrought under the old law) that

**PART** that spirit of grace and liberty which teaches  
**IV.** man internally, and carries him to a more eminent degree of perfection by the motive of love, than the apostles ever could have done by their counsels or exhortations? For the latter were satisfied with telling those who asked them what they were to do, that they must prepare themselves by repentance for baptism, in order to obtain remission of their sins, || and to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, without desiring them to leave all they had, and to devote themselves intirely to the worship of God. But the internal master who instructs them, by rendering them docil to the preaching of the apostles, and by inspiring them with repentance, adds the counsels to the precepts, and renders them capable of every thing, by communicating to them his unction and force.

### ARTICLE III.

*Sixth proof: the manifest and sensible accomplishment of what the prophets had foretold, in relation to an internal and new law.*

**I**T was thus the most important of all the promises in scripture, next to that of the Messiah, was accomplished; and instead of an external law, which rendered mankind sensible of their duty, without inspiring them with a suitable



suitable love of it, and convinced them of their iniquity without exciting them to a proper hatred of it, God himself gives them an internal and secret law, which changes their hearts and inclinations, and makes them love what he enjoins. There will a time come, says he by his prophet; † "When I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and the house of Juda: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I \* regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people. And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."

None can doubt, but that the time here spoken of is come, since all that was foretold has happened. And indeed, to what other time would we put off the accomplishment, while

† Jerem. xxxi. 32. Hebr. viii. 8.

• According to the Hebrew: I am become their master, that is to say, I have a right to treat them as I please. This is agreeable to the septuagint followed by St. Paul.



**PART** while we see with what zeal and emulation  
**III.** the chief persons in Juda and Israel, embrace  
 virtue and religion; with what enflamed love  
 they consecrate themselves to God; with what  
 perfection they fulfil his will, without any  
 other motive but that of love, without any  
 necessity of spurring, or exhorting them exter-  
 nally, and without their appearing to have had  
 need of the ministry of the apostles them-  
 selves, except to learn what they ought to believe  
 and hope, their hearts being prepared for all  
 by that internal spirit which reforms and di-  
 rects them?

We can never expect clearer, or more sen-  
 sible proofs that the new covenant has succeed-  
 ed to the old: we shall never see the internal  
 law engraved on the heart of man in more  
 strong and legible characters: and if what we  
 have seen be not the effect of the prophet's  
 promise, either some other person, and not the  
 Lord, who spoke by his mouth, must have  
 prevented the execution, or he must have imi-  
 tated it so perfectly, as to impose on all the  
 world. This would be saying, that we ought  
 neither to look upon the prophecies as serious,  
 nor their accomplishment as a proof of their  
 truth.

## ARTICLE

ARTICLE IV.

*Seventh proof: wonderful relations of conformity and difference betwixt the old and new law, which demonstrate, that the new began at the death of Christ, and received its perfection upon the mission of the Holy Ghost.*

**I**T is therefore clear, that the new covenant has succeeded the old, which was only its type and shadow, and was to disappear, as God himself had foretold, when he would write his law upon the hearts of men, instead of engraving them on tablets of stone. The relations he has established between the two covenants persuade me of it; and it is proper I should give an account to myself of these relations of conformity or difference, that I may better discover the end and design of both.

I am inclinable to think that the ancient covenant, properly speaking, began on the day the paschal lamb was sacrificed, and when the houses of the Hebrews, stained with its blood, were spared by the exterminating angel, who slew in one night all the first-born of Egypt. Then it was that God took the Israelites as it were by the hand to draw them from bondage, and to appropriate them as a select body to himself. He purified them afterwards by a kind of baptism, by opening to them a passage thorough

**PART** thorough the midst of the waters which  
**III.** drowned their enemy. He conducted them  
 after that to mount Sinai, where before he  
 gave them the law, he made Moses propose  
 to them, as a necessary condition to the treaty  
 he was going to make with them, that they  
 should obey him in all things; to which they  
 answered without hesitation, that they were  
 ready to obey him, and he might command  
 them as he pleased. God descended there-  
 fore on the mountain, whose top was enflamed,  
 and the other parts covered with a thick cloud:  
 and he ordered the ten famous commandments  
 to be pronounced by the mouth of an angel,  
 in so horrid and dreadful a tone, that the  
 people fled away, and asked as a favour  
 that God would speak no more to them  
 but by his servant Moses. This was the  
 fiftieth day after the immolation of the  
 paschal lamb; and the festival which was  
 established to preserve the memory thereof, was  
 called Pentecost.

The people of Israel who had promised to  
 God a fidelity and obedience proof against  
 every thing, fell a few days after into a shame-  
 ful idolatry, at the very foot of that mountain,  
 where the covenant had been sworn, and seal-  
 ed with the blood of those victims, which  
 Moses had spilt on twelve great stones, which  
 represented the twelve tribes. Moses, witness  
 of such a quick, sudden, and wanton disloyal-  
 ty, broke in a transport of passion the two  
 tables of stone whereon God himself had en-  
 graved the laws. And from that moment  
 the



the covenant subsisted no longer, but for  
the curse to which the people had subjected  
themselves: but God who designed to pre-  
serve it, made it serve as a type to that new  
alliance he had in his mind, and of which the  
Messiah was to be the mediator, by loading  
the former with a multiplicity of observances,  
sacrifices, and ceremonies, which promised a  
happiness they had not, but was to be the  
fruit of the new covenant.

This law was only for the Jews; and ex-  
cluded all other nations. To be admitted into  
that society, it was necessary to receive cir-  
cumcision, and submit to all the observances,  
which appeared to be the sole channel of justice,  
and the only means of pleasing God; and  
whilst this alliance with a particular people  
subsisted, all others were treated as strangers and  
impure, being typically represented by those ani-  
mals, which the law of Moses excluded from  
sacrifices, and common uses.

The new alliance began like the old, by  
the sacrifice of the paschal Lamb, not of such  
a lamb as could only be a mute and irrational  
victim, knowing neither the justice of God,  
nor the sins of men; but of him, who being  
justice and innocence itself, voluntarily under-  
took to bear the iniquitous burden of sinners,  
to the end that he might die in their name,  
and merit for them, by his obedience, a perfect  
reconciliation with his Father.

His blood was not applied to the posts and  
lintels of the doors of houses, nor spilt upon  
twelve stones, which represented more natu-  
rally

**PART** rally the hard-heartedness of the Jews, than  
**III.** the twelve tribes: it has penetrated even to the  
 consciences of men, and their most hidden  
 foldings; it has purified them from their stains:  
 and of a prophane and impure place, it has  
 made a temple, consecrated by this sacred ef-  
 fusion.

The baptism which followed, drowned the ancient sinner, and gave birth to the new man. Adam was buried in the waters, but Christ rose again. A new creature, sprung from spirit and water. And the new world has been formed on the plan of the old, which drew its origin from waters, and from the Spirit which rendered them fruitful.

This new-born people laid no claim to justice. They acknowledged they had nothing of their own, but falsity and sin. And they grounded the hope of continuing faithful to God, upon the alliance which he concluded with them; expecting obedience and docility from grace alone; and acknowledging with humility that they had no other right to this grace, but his promise.

They prepared themselves to receive this grace by ardent and continual prayers; and the fiftieth day after the sacrifice of the paschal Lamb, God himself in person came down from heaven, under the symbols of wind and fire; and without making an external sound of his law, he wrote it himself in the heart of man, or rather, he came to be himself its living law, filling it with celestial charity, and making

it find the completion of its comfort and peace in the execution of its duties.

CHAP.

XVI.

In fact, 'twas in the heart of man that his law was to be written, because 'tis the heart only that fulfils it, and it would be to no purpose engraved upon stone, or other solid things, while the heart opposed it; and sure it was to oppose it whilst it was rigorously forbid to love what it considered as its happiness, and was commanded to do what it no ways liked. In order to render the heart obedient, it was necessary it should be changed, and what other hand but that of God could change it?

The Holy Ghost becoming thus the spiritual legislator of man, became likewise his strength and fortitude. And whereas the Israelites, who were equally plunged in presumption and perjury, renounced the alliance which God had concluded with them, by preferring to him an idol: the disciples of Christ, full of his spirit and fortitude, offer themselves to the greatest perils, confess his name before his bitterest enemies, without any preceding compulsion, and take the resolution of subjecting to him the whole universe, by attacking all false divinities, and by breaking to pieces all their idols.

As the new law, of which they are at the same time the disciples and first preachers, is gratuitous, internal, and independent of the legal ceremonies of Moses, as well as of the distinctions introduced by that legislator betwixt them and other nations; its first characteristic is the union of all nations, by re-uniting in the apostles all



PART the languages which divide them, and are an  
 III. external obstacle to the unity of the same wor-  
 ship, and to the hope of the same inheritance. It invites them all promiscuously, by furnishing its ministers with the means of being understood by all. And whereas the scriptures had not been till that time entrusted but to one family, or people, and translated into one tongue: the Holy Ghost in a moment makes as many versions of the scriptures, and of the promises with which they are filled, as there are people to whom his mercy has resolved to make them common by the ministry of the apostles.

By this admirable conduct, he repairs the evils which the division of tongues (one of the most dreadful chastisements with which God has punished the pride of man) had caused in the world, where it had introduced ignorance, superstition, idolatry, the forgetfulness of the Messiah, indifference, or even mutual hatred of nations against one another, as if they had as different an original as languages: the Holy Ghost, I say, on the day of Pentecost, re-establishes them all in their ancient privileges; re-unites them as formerly under the same head, and in the same family; admits them to the promises of the Messiah, and through him to all the goods, of which they retained no longer any expectation, nor even the idea.

He begins with the Jews scattered amongst all nations, who appear before him at Jerusalem as by their deputies, and who will understand

derstand from them at their return, that salvation is preached to all, and that every tongue has already begun to confess, that Christ is in the glory of God his Father. He will afterwards send the apostles to the Gentiles, by whom they will be understood without an interpreter. And to demonstrate from that time what he designed to do over the whole universe, he suddenly forms a church, from which all divisions are excluded, wherein all things are in common, all the faithful are animated with the same spirit, and they have all but one heart, as well as one language.

This is what man certainly could never have effected, nor even so much as have imagined. 'Tis thus the two covenants have a mutual relation without a resemblance. This is what unites and distinguishes them; and we can never sufficiently admire how God has prepared the one by the other, and how evident he has rendered the proofs of the second, by its relations and differences with the first.

*Proofs of the truth of the Christian religion, and of the mysteries of Christ, by the miraculous gifts with which the churches founded by the apostles were most abundantly favoured, and which the apostles communicated to the faithful by the imposition of hands. First proof: the multitude and variety of these miraculous gifts which were public, external, and by consequence indubitable. Second proof: the effusion of these gifts upon Cornelius and his family, which determines St. Peter to receive the Gentiles to baptism, without subjecting them to circumcision, and justifies fully his conduct. Third proof: effusion of the same gifts on the disciples at Ephesus. Fourth proof: the astonishment of Simon the magician, and his desire of purchasing the power of communicating the miraculous gifts. Fifth proof: the reproach which St. Paul makes to the Galatians. Sixth proof: the truth and notoriety of the miraculous gifts demonstrated by the instructions which St. Paul gives to the Corinthians, in order to make them know their right value and use, and to hinder the confusion which their multitude and variety caused in their assemblies. The strength of such a sensible and divine testimony, in relation to Christ and his church. Last proof of the truth of those miraculous gifts, and of the christian religion: the little value the apostles set upon them in comparison of charity. Character of the true religion, to have proofs sufficient to demonstrate it, but always to prefer the means of its sanctification.* A R-



ARTICLE I.

*First proof: multitude and variety of these miraculous gifts, which were public, external, and by consequence indubitable.*

WE have seen hitherto by how many clear and manifest proofs the descent of the Holy Ghost has been demonstrated, but we have passed too lightly over those miraculous gifts, with which the Holy Ghost so abundantly favoured the apostles, and the other disciples of Christ; and we find ourselves obliged to return to examine their truth, diversity and use; and to shew how far so public and august a testimony is decisive in favour of the christian religion in general, and particularly of the certainty of the resurrection and ascension of Christ, and of his supreme power in heaven, and upon earth: since all these miraculous gifts, and the Holy Ghost himself, who communicates them with so much profusion to the disciples, are the accomplishment of his promise, the recompence of his humiliation and death, and a proof that they have reconciled man to God.

St. Paul gives us an account of these supernatural gifts, in his first epistle to the Corinthians. \* “ There are, says he, diversities of “ gifts but the same spirit . . . But the manifestation

T 3

\* 1 Cor. xii. 4, 7, &c.

PART “ festation of the Spirit, is given to every man  
 III. “ to profit withal. For to one is given by  
 { “ the Spirit the word of wisdom: to another  
 “ the word of knowledge by the same Spirit:  
 “ to another faith by the same Spirit: to ano-  
 “ ther the gifts of healing by the same Spirit:  
 “ to another the working of miracles, to ano-  
 “ ther prophecy, to another discerning of spi-  
 “ rits, to another divers kinds of tongues, to  
 “ another the interpretation of tongues. But  
 “ all these worketh that one and the self same  
 “ spirit, dividing to every man severally as he  
 “ will.”

Amongst these gifts, there are none but those of wisdom, science, and faith, which do not appear as evidently supernatural and miraculous as the rest. But since St. Paul places them in the first rank, he must look upon them as more divine and important; and he must mean by the gift of speaking with wisdom, a deep knowledge of the scriptures and mysteries, joined to a clearness and facility in discourse, beyond what is customary, and so as to point out evidently a divine operation, especially in men who were formerly carnal and illiterate. He must also understand by the gift of speaking with science, something more sublime and exalted than a common erudition, such as a comprehension of the great mysteries of redemption, worthy of an apostle, and accompanied with a certain strength and energy in discourse, which moves and persuades. As for faith, 'tis plain he cannot mean that which is essential to christian justice, and remains

remains secret, and hid in the heart, but such **CHAR**  
as works miracles, and which consisting in the **XVII.**  
internal persuasion that we have received the  
power of working them, relates less to him  
who has it, than to the church, and must cer-  
tainly be the effect of a supernatural operation.

The same apostle marks out to us the rank  
and order of these gifts: \* "And God hath  
" set some in the church, first apostles, second-  
" ly prophets, thirdly teachers, after that mi-  
" racles, then gifts of healings, helps, govern-  
" ments, diversities of tongues." Where we see  
joined to the gifts we know already, that of as-  
sisting and comforting others, and that of con-  
ducting them with wisdom and discretion, but  
in a manner which was visibly a particular and  
inspired grace, rather than the effect of natural  
talents.

Lastly, St. Paul in another place adds still  
new gifts to the detail already given: || "When  
" you come together, every one of you hath  
" a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue,  
" hath a revelation, hath an interpretation.  
" Let all things be done to edifying." That  
is, these miraculous gifts were innumerable,  
and the presence of the Holy Ghost diversified  
them an infinite number of ways.

Many, but chiefly the apostles, united in  
their persons a great number of these gifts;  
but it was more usual for each to have a parti-  
cular one to himself. And in this, the choice and  
liberty of man had no part. It was only the

T 4

Holy

\* 1 Cor. xii. 28.

|| 1 Cor. xiv. 26.



PART Holy Ghost who distributed them according  
 III. to his will, and rather for the good of the  
 church than that of particulars: † “Are all  
 “apostles? said St. Paul, are all prophets? are  
 “all teachers? are all workers of miracles?  
 “have all the gifts of healing? do all speak  
 “with tongues? do all interpret? . . . . ‡ If  
 “the whole body were an eye, where were the  
 “hearing? if the whole were hearing, where  
 “were the smelling? But now hath God set  
 “the members, every one of them in the  
 “body, as it hath pleased him.” This is the  
 comparison he uses, and which he explains at  
 large thro’ the whole chapter in a divine man-  
 ner.

Is there any thing further necessary than this  
 simple narration (to which I add no reflections,  
 because it has need of none) to persuade us  
 that all these gifts were real, public, and known  
 to every body? St. Paul goes not about to  
 prove the truth of them, he supposes it. And  
 his whole discourse to the Corinthians would  
 have been foolish and absurd, if there had been  
 nothing supernatural amongst them, if none  
 of them had wrought miracles, if none had  
 cured the sick and infirm by the invocation  
 of the name of Jesus, if none of them was a  
 prophet, and none of them spoke no other  
 tongue than the Greek.

But a fact of this importance can never be  
 too carefully proved: and it concerns the inter-  
 est of religion to demonstrate its certainty in  
 such

† 1 Cor. xii. 29.

‡ Ibid. 17.

such a manner, as will render all doubt impossible. CHAP. XVII.

## ARTICLE II.

*Second proof: effusion of these gifts upon Cornelius and his family, which determined St. Peter to receive the Gentiles to baptism, without subjecting them to circumcision, and justifies fully his conduct.*

**I**T is written in the acts of the apostles, that St. Peter being come from Joppa to Cæsarea at the desire of a Roman officer named Cornelius, to preach Christ to him; and speaking to him of his death and resurrection, even before that officer or those with him in the house had received baptism, the Holy Ghost descended upon them, † communicated to them the gift of tongues, made them prophets, and renewed upon their account all that he had done for the first disciples assembled at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. It is likewise written in the same book, that when St. Peter was returned to Jerusalem, some amongst the faithful, who had been circumcised, asked of him, with an air of censure and complaint, why he had gone to see uncircumcised persons, and eaten with them; and that this apostle, to

† Acts x.

PART to justify his conduct, told them at large how  
 III. the whole thing passed. || I beg he be heard

with attention, and then let any one judge, whether a narration so particular, and so necessarily united with the greatest event that ever happened in the world, which is the conversion of the Gentiles; a narration so public, and so contrary to the prejudices of the greatest part of the Jews, even of those who were become christians; a narration in fine so well attested both by Jews and Gentiles, and so dependent on unforeseen and supernatural events, can be looked upon as otherwise than indubitable.  
 † “ I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in  
 “ a trance I saw a vision. A certain vessel  
 “ descended as it had been a great sheet, let  
 “ down from heaven by four corners, and it  
 “ came even to me. Upon the which, when  
 “ I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and  
 “ saw four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild  
 “ beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the  
 “ air. And I heard a voice saying unto me,  
 “ Arise, Peter, slay and eat. But I said, Not  
 “ so, Lord; for nothing common or unclean  
 “ hath at any time entered into my mouth.  
 “ But the voice answered me again from heaven,  
 “ ven, What God hath cleansed, that call not  
 “ thou common. And this was done three  
 “ times; and all were drawn up again into  
 “ heaven. And behold, immediately there  
 “ were three men already come into the house  
 “ where I was, sent from Cesarea unto me.

And  
 || Acts xi. † Acts xi. 5.



“ And the Spirit bade me go with them, no-  
“ thing doubting. Moreover, these six bre-  
“ thren accompanied me, and we entered into  
“ the man’s house : and he shewed us how he  
“ had seen an angel in his house, which stood  
“ and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and  
“ and call for Simon whose surname is Peter,  
“ who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and  
“ all thy house shall be saved. And as I began  
“ to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as  
“ on us at the beginning. Then remembered  
“ I the word of the Lord, how that he said,  
“ John indeed baptized with water ; but ye  
“ shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. For-  
“ asmuch then, as God gave them the like  
“ gift as he did unto us, who believed on the  
“ Lord Jesus Christ, what was I that I could  
“ withstand God ?”

This discourse, so wise and humble, changed  
their complaints into thanksgivings : and all  
praised God for the goodness he had shewn, by  
granting also to the Gentiles the grace of re-  
pentance and salvation, of which the baptism  
by fire, and the miraculous gifts of the Holy  
Ghost, had been so evident a proof. It would  
be useless to make many reflections on this head.  
Such a discourse carries its own proofs with it ;  
and I cannot have so bad an opinion of any  
one as to think him capable of disputing it.  
I add only, that whilst St. Peter spoke to Cor-  
nelius and his family, the Holy Ghost chose  
to descend upon them in the moment that the  
apostle said, † “ To him give all the prophets  
“ witness,

† Acts x. 43.

PART "witness, that through his name, whosoever  
 III. "believeth in him shall receive remission of  
 "sins." Designing thus to shew, that it was  
 by his inspiration the prophets had spoken, and  
 that they had spoken only of Christ and his  
 future mysteries, of which his own coming,  
 and the distribution of his gifts, were the seal  
 and accomplishment.

### ARTICLE III.

*Third proof : effusion of the same gifts  
 upon the faithful of Ephesus.*

IT is written likewise in the same book † of  
 acts, that St. Paul being come to Ephesus  
 found there some disciples, whom he asked,  
 whether since they had been converted to the  
 faith, they had received the Holy Ghost ; and  
 having understood by their answer, that they  
 even knew not whether there was a Holy  
 Ghost, because they had received only the bap-  
 tism of St. John preparatory to repentance and  
 the faith of the Messiah, he ordered them to  
 be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus,  
 and laid \* his hands upon them that they might  
 receive the Holy Ghost, who descended on  
 them in such a manner that they immediately  
 spake

† Acts xix. 1.

\* And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy  
 Ghost came on them, and they spake with tongues and proph-  
 fied. Acts xix. 6.

spake with different tongues, and began to prophesy. How is it possible to suspect a fact of this nature, in the place where it was told, in the relation which it has necessarily with other indubitable circumstances, and considering that plain and natural manner in which it is written; how is it possible, I say, to suspect its having been supposed?

#### ARTICLE IV.

*Fourth proof: the astonishment of Simon the magician, and his desire of purchasing the power of conferring the like miraculous gifts.*

THE same holds good in regard of what we read of Simon the magician. || This impostor had in such a manner seduced the Samaritans by his forceries, that they almost looked upon him as a kind of divinity, and called him, the power of God. But when St. Philip, one of the seven deacons, had preached to them Jesus Christ, and had wrought great miracles in their sight, this impostor, who knew perfectly well how different they were from his illusions, was so astonished, that he asked baptism, and received it. His astonishment and surprize increased further, when he saw that St. Peter and St. John came to Samaria, to lay their hands on those who had only received

\* Acts viii.



**PART** received baptism from St. Philip, and to communicate to them the Holy Ghost, with the power of working miracles with which it was accompanied. For he saw that the gift of miracles, tho' astonishingly great, was the least wonderful thing in the apostles, and that the power of communicating this gift to their disciples resembled that of God himself. And then it was that this man, who had not preferred truth to magic, but because he hoped more honour from it, offered money to Peter, to purchase from him the same power of working miracles, and communicating it to others: when this holy apostle made him this answer, May thy money perish with thee, who hast imagined that the gifts of God can be purchased.

It is impossible to feign such circumstances, or to believe they were feigned: truth shows itself in an instant, and in an irresistible manner: and it would be to no purpose, that incredulity (should any one be so unhappy as to resist such evidence) would endeavour to obscure it by affected doubts, contrary to all the sentiments of nature.

## ARTICLE V.

*Fifth proof: reproaches which St. Paul makes to the Galatians.*

**I** Will suppose notwithstanding, that we may with some foundation be diffident of the verity

verity of these facts. But how can any one resist the impression which the reasoning of St. Paul in his epistle to the Galatians, ought to make on all impartial understandings? He had instructed them in the faith: but in his absence certain Jews, who were half Christians, endeavoured to persuade them, that they could not be saved, unless they were first circumcised. This apostle opposes strongly their error, which tended to subject them to the law of Moses, and make them hope for justification by other means, than the mediation of Christ, from whom these false doctrines endeavoured to withdraw them. And after many solid reflections, he speaks to them thus: "O \* foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? this only would I learn of you, received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? . . . He therefore that ministrath to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doth he do it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?"

The words of St. Paul cannot be stronger, nor his reproaches more poignant. But can any thing be imagined more affected, or cold, had not the Galatians received the gifts of the Holy Ghost, or any miracles been wrought

\* Gal. iii. 1, &c.

**PART** wrought in their church? It was possible  
**III.** perhaps to impose upon strangers, by saying  
falsly that the Christians wrought miracles,  
and the heads amongst them had the power  
of communicating the same quality to the  
disciples, by particular ceremonies: but could  
the apostles impose on the Christians them-  
selves, and make them believe, that they  
had received what was not given them, and  
that they daily wrought amazing miracles, tho'  
there was nothing but what was common and  
natural: and could they have been treated on  
this false principle, as foolish, bewitched, and  
carnal men, who seek vainly for salvation in  
legal observances, after having believed in  
Christ, and having received in his name the  
Holy Ghost, and the power of working mi-  
racles? could they, I say, be treated in this  
high tone, unless the person who thus treated  
them exposed himself to this inevitable reply,  
that they understood not what was said to  
them, that they were ignorant of the Holy  
Ghost, and his gifts, and that he furnished  
them with a new reason to have recourse to  
the Mosaic law, and not to place their hope  
entirely in the preaching of the gospel, by  
endeavouring to persuade them, that this  
preaching had wrought in them certain won-  
ders which were absolutely unknown to them?



ARTICLE VI.

*Sixth proof: the truth and notoriety of these miraculous gifts demonstrated by the instructions which St. Paul gives to the Corinthians, to shew them their right value and use, and to hinder that confusion, which their multitude and variety caused in their assemblies.*

**B**UT this proof of the truth of these miraculous gifts, and of their notoriety, is stronger and more cogent in relation to the Corinthians, whose church was fruitful in prodigies. We have already spoke of it, when we made the enumeration of these gifts, and shewed the use of them. But this is the place to examine thoroughly this subject, which suffices alone, when well understood, to prove all the essential truths of religion.

God had filled the Corinthians, according to St. Paul, with all spiritual riches, and all supernatural gifts: \* but many amongst them were a little too much elated with the external lustre of these gifts: and some less enlightened than the others, set too great a value on the gift of tongues. There was likewise some

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confusion

\* That in every thing ye are enriched by him: even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you, so that ye come behind in no gift. 1 Cor. i. 5, &c.

**PART** confusion in their assemblies, where those who  
**III.** had the gift of prophecy would all speak together: and where those who spoke in strange and unknown tongues, which they could not themselves interpret, nor could have proper interpreters in an instant, spoke without any benefit to those who did not understand them. St. Paul writes to inform them what are the gifts that particularly merit their esteem, and to establish in their assemblies the order and peace that reigned in all other churches.

He begins with the gift of tongues, † which was personally bestowed on those who spoke, and not on the hearers, because according to this apostle, the hearers comprehended nothing when they were not explained to them; because no one was in a condition to say Amen, and ratify thus the praises and benedictions that were given to God in an unknown tongue; because those who were but standers-by received no edification; because if strangers came into the

† For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue, speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him. 1 Cor. xiv. 2.

Else when thou shalt bless with the Spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest? v. 16.

For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified. v. 17.

If there come in unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad? v. 23.

If I come unto you, speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you? v. 6.

Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue, pray that he may interpret. v. 13.

But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church, and let him speak to himself and to God. v. 28.

I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all. v. 18.



the assembly, while several were praising God CHAP.  
in different languages, they must take them for XVII.  
fools; because, if he himself spoke to them  
in that manner, it would be of no use to them;  
and in fine, because he would not have them  
speak unknown languages when they had not  
interpreters, or had not themselves obtained of  
God the grace of interpreting in the com-  
mon tongue what they had spoke by the in-  
spiration of God in an unknown language.

These proofs irrefragably demonstrate, that  
the gift of tongues was really in those who  
spoke them; and thus what Saint Paul says, that  
he speaks all the languages of those people  
to whom God has appointed him an apostle,  
he comprehends in these few words all the lan-  
guages on earth. To make this miracle more  
sensible, and hinder strangers and unbelievers  
from suspecting that these tongues had been  
learnt in a natural manner by those who spoke  
them, God had on purpose separated the gift of  
tongues from the interpretation of them, in  
order to unite them when he pleased, and like-  
wise to confer one without the other when he  
pleased: and this latter method seems to have  
been the most customary amongst the faithful.  
It happened pretty often that a man was inspired  
by God to praise him, and give him thanks in  
the Egyptian, for example, or the Arabian  
tongue, without understanding them, or being  
able to explain to others what he had spoken  
by a supernatural motion in these foreign lan-  
guages, though so distinctly pronounced, that  
an interpreter might have given perfectly



PART the sense, and actually gave it when he was  
 III. present. Such a miracle removed all the suspi-  
 cion that the most timid or malignant diffidence  
 could have formed. And Saint Paul acknow-  
 ledges likewise \* that it was a convincing  
 proof to the unfaithful of the truth of re-  
 ligion.

This miracle consisted in this, that contrary to natural order, the connection of those thoughts and sentiments, which the Spirit of God formed in him who spoke with a strange tongue, with the words which he pronounced externally, was not known but by the Spirit of God himself, who made him articulate that which answered to the internal motions, without using his liberty and reason, as in other discourses, to form the words. Thus natural reason, which is called by Saint Paul thought or understanding, knew not the connection or order of the discourse, and had no share at all in it: which makes the same apostle say, that the understanding was then idle, deprived of the benefit and fruit of the word, whilst the Holy Ghost acted in the soul in a manner equally internal and sublime, by revealing his miracles, which he himself alone published outwardly, by the mouth of him whose mind he filled with divine light.

The advantage would have been greater, both in regard of him that spoke and the hearers, had the revelation of God been joined with the natural action of thought or reason, whilst the person

\* "Tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not." 1 Cor. xiv. 22.

person spoke freely, and with knowledge of the connection betwixt the inspired sentiments, and those Egyptian or Arabian terms which signified them. For then the sublimest part of the soul and natural reason had been equally edified by concurring to the same action; and the audience might have learnt in their own tongue, the sense of a discourse, that was indeed foreign to their ears, but very intelligible to him who spoke it, and who might easily interpret it.

This is what methinks Saint Paul clearly expresses, if we will apply ourselves to understand him: \* "For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue, speaketh not unto men, but unto God, for no man understandeth him: howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries. He that speaketh in an unknown tongue, edifieth himself, but he that prophesieth edifieth the church. Wherefore, let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue, pray that he may interpret. For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful. What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also. If any man speak in the assemblies in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or the most by three; and that by course, and let one interpret. But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the

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\* 1 Cor. xiv. 4, 13, 14, 15, 27, 28.



PART "the church, and let him speak to himself  
 III. "and to God."

— This rule, so worthy of the wisdom and moderation of St. Paul, was necessary to hinder the time of the assembly's from being taken up with such discourses as were in reality supernatural and miraculous, but from which the auditors could learn nothing salutary and edifying: and it is a proof of that care which God took to make the presence of his Spirit so evident and manifest that nothing might be capable of obscuring it.

Saint Paul knew the price and value of it, but he looked upon the gift of prophecy as far superior to the gift of languages: \* "I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied:" and in another place, † "Covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues."

But what must we understand by this gift of prophecy? he himself will explain it to us. ‡ "If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad? But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all. And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest, and so falling down on his face, he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth." Those then who had the gift of prophecy knew

\* 1 Cor. xiv. 5.

† v. 39

‡ v. 3.



Knew the most secret things, were in a condi- CHAP.  
tion to discover what was most hid in the XVII.  
heart; and they made a good use of this light,  
to convict and judge the unbelievers, and oblige  
them to confess, that God was indeed amongst  
the Christians.

They knew likewise the most profound my-  
steries of religion, and they often received re-  
velations from God, of which they gave a sin-  
cere account to the church which was edified  
by them, and judged of them by other pro-  
phets, to whom the discernment of spirits was  
given. "When ye come together, says Saint  
Paul, \* every one of you hath a psalm, hath  
a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation,  
hath an interpretation. Let all things be  
done to edifying. Let the prophets speak,  
two or three, and let the other judge. If any  
thing be revealed to another that sitteth by,  
let the first hold his peace. For ye may all  
prophecy one by one, that all may learn, and  
may be comforted. And the spirits of the  
prophets (that is to say, the impulse of the Holy  
Spirit which reveals by them) are subject to  
the prophets (and depend in practice upon  
their own liberty.) For God is not the au-  
thor of confusion, but of peace, as in all the  
churches of the saints. (For) what? came  
the word of God out from you? or came it  
unto you only? If any man think himself to  
be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknow-  
ledge, that the things I write unto you are

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1 Cor. xiv. 26, 27.

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PART. "the commandments of the Lord." Here I  
 III. stop to make some reflections; and desire the  
 reader to join with me.

First, It is visible that St. Paul speaks to the Corinthians of the miraculous gifts with which the Holy Ghost had enriched their church merely out of necessity, and to inform them how they ought to use them in their assemblies, to the end that every thing might be done in decency and order: that upon this account, after having enumerated those gifts, among which the cure of the sick, and the power of working miracles are mentioned, he takes no further notice afterwards of those two gifts, tho' so supernatural and divine, because they did not concern the assemblies, and could cause no confusion in them. Whereas he enlarges much upon the gift of tongues, and of prophecy, of which the discernment of spirits was a kind of consequence and appendage; because it was principally in the assemblies of the faithful that these gifts were of use, and the great number of those who had received them was capable of disturbing order and peace; by following rather personal inspiration and impulse than consulting carefully the public edification.

Secondly, It is likewise evident by the testimony of St. Paul, that the other churches were not less enriched with supernatural and miraculous gifts, than that of Corinth, because he had been obliged to make there the same regulations, and to establish the same order, to the

the end that those who spake different tongues, CHAP. I  
and had the gift of prophecy, might only use XVII.  
them decently, and rather to edify their bre-  
thren than make an ostentation of what the  
Holy Ghost operated in them. You are not,  
said that apostle to the Corinthians, neither the  
first nor the only ones who have received the  
gospel. And what I teach you is what I have  
already taught all the churches of the saints.  
In effect, he writes to the Thessalonians, †  
that the preaching of the gospel of Christ by  
his mouth, terminated not in simple words,  
but was confirmed by miracles, by the gifts  
which the Holy Ghost had poured forth upon  
them all, and by the full certainty derived  
from such evidence. And by the advice he  
gives them, not to extinguish the Spirit, or  
to despise prophecy, it seems he was afraid on  
their account, lest the multiplicity and abun-  
dance of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, might  
diminish their esteem of them, so as to dry up  
the spring from whence they flowed, by their  
ingratitude. We have seen that the Galatians  
exposed themselves to this danger, by giving  
too much credit to false teachers, tho' they  
themselves still retained the power of working  
miracles: and what has been mentioned by us  
about the churches of Ephesus and Samaria,  
renders

† For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also  
in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.  
Και ἐν πληροφωρίᾳ πολλῇ. 1 Thess. i. 5.

Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings. 1 Thess.  
v. 19.



PART renders the thing certain, in regard of all the  
 III. rest.

Thirdly, It is impossible that St. Paul should have given such serious advice concerning the use of miraculous gifts, had there been none in the church of Corinth, nor in any others. In what respect could order be confounded in their assemblies, by those who spake in different tongues, if none had any other but the common idiom? Why should an interpreter be necessary to explain to others an unknown tongue, if it was not unknown? How should an interpreter understand what the person himself who spoke could not explain, if he spoke nothing but what he had learnt with study, or if he said nothing that was coherent, but spoke an unintelligible and barbarous jargon? What necessity was there to fix the number of those that in an assembly were to speak different tongues, or were to prophesy, if these gifts were very rare, and no way common? How could the prophets discover the most secret things to strangers, to unbelievers, to men who were enemies of our religion; and how could they oblige them to prostrate themselves before the God of the christians, if they had no supernatural knowledge? What meant that council and senate, as it were, of the prophets, who in each church judged of the truth of revelations, if none had any? What were those inspired and prophetic canticles, which comforted and edified every body, if the whole congregation was mute?

How,

How, in short, could the faithful listen to CHAP.  
the discourses of St. Paul, read his letter in XVII.  
their assemblies, and benefit by his advice, if  
there was nothing wonderful amongst them, or  
if these wonders were doubtful, or so rare that  
there were no more than two or three persons  
who spoke different tongues, or cured the sick,  
or wrought other miracles?

## ARTICLE VII.

*Force of so sensible and divine a testi-  
mony, in relation to Christ and the  
christian church.*

**I**T is therefore evident, that these gifts were  
very real, public, and common; and that  
it was necessary the apostles should employ all  
their authority, and even the command \* of  
Christ himself, to regulate the order and use  
of them. And now I ask, whether there was  
ever any thing of a like nature? whether the  
Holy Ghost, invisible as he is, could have been  
more present? whether the testimony he gave  
of Christ could have been more wonderful and  
divine? whether Christ could, from the right  
hand of his Father where he was seated, shew  
his supreme power in a more sensible and mag-  
nificent manner? whether the christian church,  
which is his work, could have begun in a  
manner

\* The things that I write to you are the commands of God.  
1 Cor. xiv. 37.

**PART** manner that better distinguished it from the  
**III.** synagogue, and all past or future sects? whether those who mistake it after these marks, and refuse to submit to its authority, or still look upon the miracles and mysteries of the resurrection and ascension of Christ as doubtful, can be accounted excusable?

It would have been a great matter if the apostles alone had wrought miracles: but that they should communicate this power to the greatest part of the disciples, surpasses all expectation. That the disciples, tho' humble and modest, should have need of being restrained by the apostles, lest their religious meetings should be intirely spent in the exhibition of miracles, or that there might be room for all those who were capable of working such prodigies, is a superabundance of proofs, against which no incredulity can possibly withstand. But that all these shining proofs not only did not puff up the minds of the apostles, but were not even so much as mentioned by them, but thro' necessity, and that they always set a greater value on what was edifying and useful than on what was only proper to excite admiration, is the last degree to which the evidence of the christian religion could be carried.

## ARTICLE



ARTICLE VIII.

*Seventh proof: the last proof of the truth of the miraculous gifts and of the christian church: the little account the apostles made of them, in comparison of charity.*

**T**HIS article notwithstanding is still more surprizing, when we examine it thoroughly, and it bears a brighter stamp of divinity than perhaps we imagine: for the apostles are not satisfied with preferring the gift of prophecy, the understanding of mysteries, the knowledge of the sublimest truths, and the gift of speaking worthily of them; with preferring them, I say, to the gift of tongues, to the cure of the sick, and to miracles of different kinds, as more useful to the church, and proper to edify the faithful; but they reckon even all these gifts as nothing in comparison of charity, which alone seems to them worthy of being esteemed and desired for it self.

† “ Among the miraculous gifts, said St. Paul, covet earnestly the best: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way. || Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though “ I had

**PART** " I had the gift of prophecy, and understood  
**III.** " all mysteries, and all knowledge, and though  
 " I have all faith, so that I could remove  
 " mountains, and have no charity, I am no-  
 " thing. And though I bestow all my goods  
 " on the poor, and though I give my body to  
 " be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth  
 " me nothing."

But let us ask this apostle, what is charity, and what is its lustre, thus to obscure all miracles, prophecies, knowledge, and even the glory of martyrdom? " Charity, he answers, " suffereth long, and is kind : charity envieth not : charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, seeketh not her own : rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth : beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things : charity never faileth. But whether there be prophecies, " they shall fail ; whether there be tongues, " they shall cease ; whether there be know-  
 " ledge, it shall vanish away."

All this is true : but how great a light was necessary to distinguish the value of a virtue that was quite internal, and to give it such a preference over all other, even the most shining gifts, which made the apostles be regarded as divine men, or rather as divinities, by those who saw nothing but their miracles? How pure must their hearts have been, to reckon as nothing such a glory, in comparison of a secret virtue, that was always veiled by humility? How beautiful is it to hear St. Paul declare (St. Paul, who could raise the dead, and whose  
 linens

linens drove away devils and cured the sick) CHAP. I  
to hear him, I say, declare, that he should be XVIII.  
as nothing with all those gifts, were he not  
mild and patient through charity? With what  
pleasure do I listen to him, when he says to a  
church most abundantly favoured with miracu-  
lous gifts, that he will discover to them a nobler  
and more excellent way than all other gifts, and  
that this nobler and more excellent way is a  
virtue, enemy of all pride and self-love, and  
prepared for all manner of sufferings? Far am  
I from suspecting a man so sincere, so disinte-  
rested, and so well instructed in the true value  
of things, of having flattered the Corinthians,  
by attributing to them false miracles: on the  
contrary, I revere him as a man descended  
from the third heaven, to whom the substance  
of eternal goods has been revealed, and who  
knew what gifts were durable, and what was  
the right use of those which were only tem-  
poral.

## ARTICLE IX.

*Characteristic of the true religion, to  
have truths that demonstrate its ve-  
rity, and yet to prefer the means of  
its sanctification.*

OUR apostle has distinguished the proofs  
of the verity of religion from the truth  
or reasonableness of its worship. He had an  
esteem



**PART** esteem for the gifts capable of convincing and  
**III.** persuading : but he always preferred those that  
 renew the heart. He saw what was highly  
 beneficial to many : but he esteemed it as no-  
 thing in regard of those who sacrificed their  
 own lives by endeavouring to save others. No-  
 thing can be juster : but nothing was less  
 known. The mind of man is naturally in-  
 clined to the marvellous ; and as this marvel-  
 lous came from God, and did honour to reli-  
 gion, it was easy to love the outward shew as  
 well as the use, and afterwards to turn both to  
 their own interests. The apostles knew the  
 danger, and avoiding it themselves, taught their  
 disciples to shun it by their example.

By this means they have completed the proof  
 of the verity of the christian religion by mira-  
 culous gifts : for it is essential to religion to  
 have such a testimony ; and it is still essential  
 to it, not to put it upon an equality with cha-  
 rity. The church ought to receive from the  
 Holy Ghost those gifts, which draw upon her  
 the respect and admiration of strangers, that  
 they might become her disciples : but she  
 ought likewise to receive from him those graces  
 by which she is sanctified : and she ought even  
 to make a great difference betwixt those gifts  
 which render her amiable, and those which  
 excite the admiration of men. I would ad-  
 mire her, perhaps, if she was intirely taken  
 up with those gifts which attract admiration,  
 but I listen to her with docility, and I admire  
 her still more, when I learn from her what use  
 she

she makes of so many gifts that embellish her CHAP.  
outwardly, and the preference she gives to those XVIII.  
secret virtues which enrich her within, the  
principal of which is charity.

CHAP. XVIII.

God by converting St. Paul, and calling him to the apostleship, has taken away every false pretext from incredulity and distrust, and he has proved indisputably the truth of the christian religion in all its parts. The circumstances of his conversion. Discourse, wherein the proof of the christian religion, by the conversion and apostleship of St. Paul, is set in its full evidence and force. This proof appears still stronger and brighter, when we compare it with the vocation and conversion of the Gentiles. It becomes still more moving and affecting, when we compare it with the vocation and future conversion of the Jews.

ARTICLE I.

God by converting St. Paul, and calling him to the apostleship, has taken away every false pretext from incredulity and distrust. Circumstances of his conversion.

WE have seen in the last chapter, that it was not the apostles alone who bore witness to the truth, by the miraculous gifts

PART which the Holy Ghost had communicated to  
 III. them; but that all the christian churches whom

the same gifts had enriched, joined likewise their testimony to that of the apostles; and that in all of them, the Holy Ghost bore witness, that Christ was in heaven, and seated at the right hand of God, and that it was only through faith in his name we might hope for salvation. Such a proof, which contains so many others, must certainly be looked upon as superior to all suspicion. For it would no longer be the sincerity of the apostles, but the deposition of the whole universe which we suspected, besides treating at the same time all the miracles whereof each church is witness, as impostures and fables.

But divine providence, who knows how far human diffidence and distrust may go, and how slow men are in believing what they have not seen, chose out an apostle from amidst the most zealous enemies of Christ, to the end that the others might not be suspected. And the same providence likewise designed, that he who had shewn the greatest rage against Christ, and who looked upon it as an insufferable blasphemy that any one should say, that he was risen, and seated at the right hand of God, \* should become one of his most faithful disciples and zealous preachers.

The history of his conversion and vocation to the apostleship is related three different times in the acts of the apostles. The first time by St. Luke, † and the two others by St. Paul himself,

\* Acts vii. 55, &c.

† Ibid. c. ix.



himself, on two famous occasions, wherein he CHAP.  
was obliged to speak in his defence. First, † XVIII.  
before the council of priests and elders, and  
afterwards || before Agrippa king of the Jews,  
and Festus governor of Judea for the Romans.

We must join these three narrations to make a  
complete one: but it will be easy to unite the  
circumstances omitted, when we have listened  
to the discourse of St. Paul before Agrippa,  
without interrupting him. \* “ I verily thought

“ with myself, says he, that I ought to do  
“ many things contrary to the name of Jesus  
“ of Nazareth. Which thing I also did at  
“ Jerusalem, and many of the saints did I shut  
“ up in prison, having received authority from  
“ the chief priests, and when they were put  
“ to death I gave my voice against them. And  
“ I punished them oft in every synagogue, and  
“ compelled them to blaspheme: and being  
“ exceeding mad against them, I persecuted  
“ them even unto strange cities. Whereupon  
“ as I went to Damascus, with authority and  
“ commission from the chief priests: at mid-  
“ day, O king, I saw in the way a light from  
“ heaven, above the brightness of the sun,  
“ shining round about me, and them which  
“ journeyed with me. And when we were all  
“ fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speak-  
“ ing unto me, and saying in the Hebrew  
“ tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou  
“ me? it is hard for thee to kick against the  
“ pricks. And I said, Who art thou, Lord?  
“ And he said, I am Jesus, whom thou per-  
“ secutest.

X 2

† Acts xxii.

|| Ibid. xxvi.

\* Ibid. xxvi. 9, &c.

PART

III.

“secutest. But rise, and stand upon thy feet,  
 “for I have appeared unto thee for this pur-  
 “pose, to make thee a minister and a witness  
 “both of those things which thou hast seen,  
 “and of those things in the which I will ap-  
 “pear unto thee: delivering thee from the  
 “people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom  
 “now I send thee, to open their eyes, and to  
 “turn them from darkness to light, and from  
 “the power of satan unto God, that they may  
 “receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance  
 “among them which are sanctified by faith  
 “that is in me. Whereupon, O king Agrippa,  
 “I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vi-  
 “sion: but shewed first unto them of Damaf-  
 “cus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all  
 “the coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles,  
 “that they should repent and turn to God, and  
 “do works meet for repentance. For these  
 “causes the Jews caught me in the temple,  
 “and went about to kill me. Having there-  
 “fore obtained help of God, I continue unto  
 “this day, witnessing both to small and great,  
 “saying none other things than those which  
 “the prophets and Moses did say should come;  
 “that Christ should suffer, and that he should  
 “be the first that should rise from the dead,  
 “and should shew light unto the people, and  
 “to the Gentiles.”

We must add to this discourse, that those  
 who accompanied St. Paul, heard the same  
 voice as he; \* but only the sound and not the  
 articulate words, and that they did not see

Christ;

\* Acts ix. 7. compared with Acts xxii. 9.

Christ; that Saint Paul was blinded by the blaze of light he had seen, though his eyes remained open; and that they led him by the hand to Damascus; that he continued there three days without eating or drinking; † that Ananias was sent to him from God, who finding him in prayer, put his hands on him, and immediately a kind of scales fell from his eyes; that the same Ananias baptized him, after he had declared that God had revealed to him his vocation to the apostleship, and without preparing him for baptism by any instruction; that immediately after this St. Paul preached in the synagogue at Damascus, that Jesus was the Son of God, and this with so much energy, that the Jews, whom he confounded by his strong reasons, conspired against his life, and watched night and day at the gates of the city, to the end he might not escape; and that the disciples, to save him from the fury of the Jews, let him down from the wall during the night in a basket.

When he had left Damascus, instead of going to Jerusalem, where the apostles then were, he went and preached the gospel in Arabia, from whence he returned a second time to Damascus. It was not till three years after his conversion and apostleship that he came to Jerusalem to visit St. Peter. And so little was he known by the faithful of that church, that St. Barnabas was obliged to introduce him to them, and to answer as it were for his sincerity. He continued there but fifteen days, and did not return till fourteen years after, to con-



PART fer with St. James, St. Peter, and St. John,  
 III. who taught him nothing, nor encreased his  
 light, though they were looked upon as pillars  
 of the church. He was even obliged to resist  
 St. Peter to his face in the city of Antioch,  
 where his condescendence to the new-converted  
 Jews might have been of dangerous conse-  
 quence: and there appears in reality in all his  
 epistles something more exalted, profound, and  
 magnanimous, than in those of the other apo-  
 stles, in regard of true justice, essentially united  
 with faith in Christ, though all the apostles  
 taught in effect upon this point the same  
 doctrine.

He likewise made profession of holding his  
 apostleship from Christ alone, without the con-  
 currence of the other apostles, or their serving  
 as instruments in his vocation. He declared  
 openly that Christ alone had been his master,  
 \* that he had instructed him in the gospel, and  
 that

\* “ But when it pleased God, who separated me from my  
 “ mother’s womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son  
 “ in me, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood :  
 “ ἐ προσανεθέμην σαρκὶ καὶ αἵματι, neither went I up  
 “ to Jerusalem to them that were apostles before me, but I went  
 “ into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Then after  
 “ three years, I went up to Jerusalem, to see Peter, and abode  
 “ with him fifteen days. But other of the apostles saw I none,  
 “ except James the Lord’s brother. Now the things which  
 “ I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not. I was  
 “ unknown by face unto the churches of Judea. Gala. (see Acts  
 “ ix. 27 ) Then fourteen years after, I went up again to Jeru-  
 “ salem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also. And  
 “ communicated unto them that gospel, but privately with them  
 “ who were of reputation—For they who seemed to be some-  
 “ what, in conference added nothing to me—And when James,  
 “ Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the  
 “ grace

that he taught nothing but what Christ re-  
vealed to him in his first apparition, or in those  
that followed, according to his promise. And  
he confirmed these truths, which were in other  
respects public, and proved by facts, whose  
certainty was notorious, by taking God to wit-  
ness of his strict sincerity.

There is nothing, methinks, more proper to  
banish all suspicions that incredulity can form  
against the testimony of the apostles and first  
disciples of Christ, than what we have now re-  
lated: but to assist those who may still hesitate,  
and to strengthen and comfort those who have  
faith, I will put myself for a while in the place  
of one of those, who respect it but with some ti-  
midity, and shall adopt his language for a few  
moments.

“ grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas  
“ the right hands of fellowship, that we should go unto the hea-  
“ then, and they unto the circumcision. Galat. ii. 1, 6, 9:  
“ Paul an apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus  
“ Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead.  
“ Gal. i. 1. But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which  
“ was preached of me, is not after man. For I neither re-  
“ ceived it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revela-  
“ tion of Jesus Christ. Gal. i. 11. But when Peter was come  
“ to Antioch, I withstood him to the face; because he was to be  
“ blamed—But when I saw that they walked not uprightly,  
“ according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before  
“ them all. Gal. ii. 11, 14.

*Discourse, wherein the proof of the christian religion, by the apostleship and conversion of St. Paul, is set in its full evidence and strength.*

I Acknowledge, such a one will say, I have nothing to reply against what I have hitherto heard : but I am rather over-powered by the proofs, than satisfied; and there remains in spite of me, in the bottom of my heart, a secret diffidence, lest the apostles and first disciples of Christ should have followed a little their prejudices, and their first engagement should have carried them further than was necessary. I see clearly, that I am in the wrong, and that my diffidence, after so many demonstrations, is unreasonable. But I could have wished, for the satisfaction of my weakness, that Christ had not contented himself after his resurrection with those disciples only whom he instructed in his life-time, but that he had chosen some apostle of another character \* than the former, who were poor illiterate men; that he had chosen him from amongst the Pharisees his declared enemies, and had converted him in spite of his obstinacy. I could likewise have wished, that this new disciple had been full of a bitter zeal against the church, that he had persecuted

\* A character peculiar to St. Paul. " I lived a Pharisee. Acts xxvi. 5.



persecuted it, and had joined for this end some **CHAP.**  
credit and authority to passion and blindness :XVIII.

\* that he had not seen in the scriptures, of  
which he thought he had a perfect knowledge,  
ought but a glorious and immortal Messiah;  
that he had abhorred the scandal of the cross,  
and that being full of his own righteousness,  
he had been an enemy to that of faith and  
grace. This is the character I should have  
wished him of.

As for his conversion, I should have desired  
several circumstances in it, that I might be  
sure of its truth. I should first of all have ex-  
cluded all human methods, such as instruction,  
persuasion, and even the miracles wrought by  
the apostles: for it would be otherwise falling  
into the inconvenience I designed to avoid, and  
returning to the original point from which I  
purposed to remove. Neither would the mi-  
nistry of angels have been my choice. Even  
a secret and obscure apparition of Christ him-  
self would not have satisfied me. To convince  
me, it would have been necessary that he had  
shewn himself in broad-day-light to his enemy,  
with a brightness more dazzling than the sun;  
that he had thrown him down, blinded him,  
spoke to him in a thundering voice, triumphed  
over his pride and hatred in a moment, and  
changed him into a disciple and apostle before  
he could raise himself from the ground.

Circum-  
stances of  
his con-  
version.  
First, as to  
the means.

But

\* " Brought up in this city, at the feet of Gamaliel. Acts  
xxii. 3.

PART. But to these circumstances I should have

III. added many others to satisfy myself of the truth. I should first have chosen the country,

Secondly, as to the place, as a place less exposed to deceit and artifice, than the city, and where an event of this notoriety might be better examined. Yet I should not have wished it distant from a considerable town, that the consequences of this prodigy might have had competent witnesses; and that those who accompanied the new disciple, and were spectators of what had happened to him in the way, might give an account to several persons whilst the thing was still recent.

Thirdly, as to the testimonies.

In the second place, I would have had this disciple to have gone from Jerusalem, with power and commission from the first magistrates and the high priest to persecute the christians of another famous city, to put them in chains, and drag them thus before the judges. I would have given him for companions, to execute these severe orders, men as passionate and prejudiced as himself. And had the thing depended on my choice, I should have desired that all these men had seen the blaze of light, but without being struck blind, to the end they might serve as guides to their leader, and that they should have heard likewise the voice which spake to him; but without understanding any thing, because they were only to be witnesses, and not disciples; and this second quality on this occasion, would have been prejudicial to the other. By this means I think the apparition and conversion would have been indubitable. But I should still

have

have required something more ; for it is not, **CHAP. I**  
strictly speaking, a conversion I seek, but the **XVIII.**  
apostleship, and the proofs of the apostleship.

It would therefore have been necessary to **Fourthly,**  
convince me, that this man thus blinded, **thus** in regard  
thunderstruck, should become on a sudden an **to the a-**  
apostle, not only by his zeal, but by his light, **postolate,**  
and inspired knowledge ; that he were instructed **and the**  
without a visible master, in all the doctrine of **instruction**  
of Christ, in his morals, his mysteries, the de- **necessary**  
tail of his actions, and in the discourses he had **to the a-**  
held with his disciples ; that he should discover **postolate,**  
Christ in the scriptures, where he had never **independ-**  
seen him ; that they should be interpreted **ent of the**  
him in a sense quite opposite to his ancient pre- **other apo-**  
judices ; and that he should be in a condition **stles, and as**  
of confuting the most skilful Jews, without **perfect, or**  
having conferred with any one disciple, or with **even more**  
any of the ancient apostles. **elevated**  
**than that**  
**which**  
**they had**  
**received**  
**from Jesus**  
**Christ.**

Such a proof, I confess, would make on me  
a surprizing impression. For how would it be  
possible for me to doubt that Christ in person  
had been the master of this new apostle, since  
he would know and teach the same things as  
the ancient disciples, without having had any  
commerce with them, and having entertained  
to that time nothing but disdain and contempt  
of them. This proof alone would dissipate all  
my former suspicions of the apostles, did they  
say nothing but what this new preacher did ;  
and the conformity betwixt them would force  
me to confess they must have had the same  
master.

I should



PART

III.

I should be still more convinced if I could join two other marks. The one, that this new apostle should avoid during some years meeting with the first apostles, and that it should be known by all, that he had lived in foreign countries, remote from their conversation and sight: and that afterwards coming to an interview with them, he should be found so perfectly instructed that they could teach him nothing new, and that his light as well as courage should appear superior to the chiefs and pillars of the church. This wonder would crown all the rest: and I should not then have any difficulty to put the authority of such an apostle in ballance with that of the old ones, and to equal his testimony in regard of the resurrection of Christ and his whole doctrine, to that of all the other witnesses; if I did not even in this sense give him the preference, viz. that in respect to him all possible grounds of suspicion were removed from my mind.

Fifthly,  
as to the  
success of  
the apostolate, and  
to the  
proofs of  
its success.

The second mark would be the success of the predication and labours of this apostle, called to that office by the powerful voice of Christ after his resurrection. For methinks his gratitude ought to be infinite, his zeal indefatigable, and the fruit of his labours should bear the character

† “When they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter. (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me towards the Gentiles.) And when James, Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands  
“ of

character of an extraordinary vocation, and an-  
swer to the majesty of him who descended from heaven surrounded with glory, to free him from incredulity, and to triumph thro' him over the infidelity of the world. I should be transported with joy, if such a success were public, attested by facts acknowledged of all, and confirmed even by the testimony of the other apostles, who confining themselves in some measure to the conversion of the Jews, would yield to him the conquest of all nations, as to a man whom the whole universe could scarce suffice.

I should still go further in my projects: I should desire there might remain some monuments in writing of the great wisdom, ardent zeal, and success of the predication of this heavenly man. I should require that he had been obliged thro' urgent necessities, to instruct by his letters those churches which had been formed by his care; that he should write to the Hebrews, as well as Gentiles, and that one might perceive in reading them the liveliness of his faith, his thorough persuasion that Christ is in heaven, || and that he is to come to judge mankind; his firm hope in him, his expectation of his last coming, his profound knowledge of scripture, his penetration in perceiving Christ in those places where he is covered under the veil of mysteries, his love for him,

as to the personal qualifications of that apostle with relation to Christ.

“ of fellowship, that we should go unto the heathen, and they  
“ unto the circumcision.” Gal. ii. 7.  
|| Phil. iii. 6, 8. 1 Cor. ii. 2. Gal. vi. 14.

**PART** him, his contempt of all those things he had  
**III.** formerly looked upon as advantages, his re-  
 spect above all for his cross and ignomi-  
 nies, which had so long concealed him, his  
 desire to resemble him in his sufferings and  
 humiliations, and his public profession of  
 knowing only him, but crucified and covered  
 with insults, and thereby conqueror of Satan  
 and the world. If this were granted me, I  
 should have nothing further to desire. I should  
 look upon those precious letters as inestimable  
 treasures. And I could never cease giving  
 thanks to God for having given to his church  
 such a man, and by him such a number of  
 proofs that Christ his Son is risen, and that he  
 has in heaven and upon earth a power without  
 bounds.

The answer to such a discourse is easy. All  
 your wishes, one may say to such a man, are  
 accomplished, and even surpassed. You have  
 in St. Paul, in his first character, in his conver-  
 sion, in his vocation to the apostleship, in the  
 ministry of his office, in the success of his  
 preaching, in his sentiments, in his letters,  
 more than you have desired. You would be  
 inexcusable, according to your own acknow-  
 ledgment, if after the conditions which you  
 required, you had hesitated in your faith, and  
 were not full of gratitude to God, who has  
 had pity on your weakness, and deprived you  
 of all pretence: his goodness has even done  
 more for you. Judge then what you owe him,  
 and whether you ought to doubt, when you  
 should



should pour forth your souls in praise and thanksgiving.

CHAP.

XVIII.

ARTICLE III.

*The proof of the christian religion, by the conversion and vocation of St. Paul, becomes still more clear and strong, when we compare it with the vocation and conversion of the Gentiles.*

**T**HE proof of the christian religion by the miraculous conversion of St. Paul, and his vocation to the apostleship, becomes still more clear and of greater consequence, when we examine into the motives of this wonderful event, and its relations with the designs of God upon the Jews and Gentiles. In order to explain myself, I am obliged to take things a little higher: but I shall take care to be short.

Whilst the Jews enjoyed light, and were the only people who knew the true God, others were in darkness and seemed abandoned. \* No prophet was sent to them: they were strangers to the scriptures: the promise of the Messiah was effaced out of their memory: they had no

\* "Wherefore remember, that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." Eph. ii. 11.

**PART** no share in the alliance made with the Jews :  
~~III~~ **IV** they were even excluded by the conditions of  
~~this~~ this alliance : and they were, in a true sense,  
 as it were without God or hope in this  
 world.

Christ by coming to preach to the Jews,  
 declared he was not sent but to the lost sheep  
 of the house of Israel ; and he forbade his dis-  
 ciples to carry during his life the news of the  
 gospel to the Samaritans and Gentiles. It is  
 true, that after his resurrection he took off this  
 order, but commanding them at the same time  
 to begin in Jerusalem and Judea, and not to  
 preach to all nations, till they had first made it  
 known to those to whom the promises had  
 been made for so many ages.

The remnant of Israel, saved thro' grace,  
 listened to the apostles : but the others remain-  
 ed indocile. They rejected with scorn and con-  
 tempt the word of truth : they endeavoured  
 to obliterate the proofs of the resurrection of  
 Christ : and not being able to silence the wit-  
 nesses, they persecuted them with a rage, which  
 the blood of St. Stephen only inflamed, and  
 rendered more implacable.

Then it was that the divine mercy chose to  
 call the Gentiles to a happiness, of which the  
 Jews declared themselves unworthy : but to  
 shew that their vocation was extraordinary, un-  
 expected, and contrary in some measure to the  
 first plan and design, God called in an extra-  
 ordinary and unexpected manner, contrary to  
 all appearance of probability, him whom he  
 had pitched upon for their apostle.

As

As the vocation of the Gentiles was more gratuitous than that of the Jews, the vocation of their apostle was still to be manifestly more gratuitous than that of the ancient disciples: and it was necessary, in order to render such a grace more sensible, that God should grant it at the very time when St. Paul least deserved it.

As the Jews were obstinate in denying the resurrection of Christ, notwithstanding the convincing proofs they had of it; 'twas proper it should be Christ himself, risen again to life, who should chuse and instruct the person that was to preach his resurrection to all other nations with incredible success.

In fine, as the Gentiles had no promises, no part in the covenant, no relation with the ancient patriarchs and prophets; it was requisite that their ambassador should accomplish his commission without concerting the means with the first apostles: that he should go alone to the conquest of the Gentiles: and should follow a new path, tho' he preached the same truth. And this his commission signified in plain terms: \* "But rise, and stand upon thy feet; for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness, both of those things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee: delivering thee from these people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee."

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Y

ARTICLE

\* Acts xxvi. 16, 17;



## ARTICLE IV.

*This proof becomes more sensible and affecting, when we compare the conversion and vocation of St. Paul, with the vocation and future conversion of the Jews.*

**B**UT this is not all: Christ by chusing St. Paul at the very time he bore arms against him, to shew mercy to him, and to make him the minister of his grace towards the Gentiles, thought likewise of the future reconciliation of the Jews, and he would have the conversion of his apostle to be the pledge and figure of it.

This apostle was enraged against him for whom his nation had so long wished. He persecuted him, without knowing who he was. He reckoned him dead at the very time when he was seated at the right hand of his Father. His misfortune came from his blindness, and his blindness came from believing himself too wise. He imagined that he understood the scripture which he read with the veil that Moses had put upon his face, and which covered the surface of the prophecies, whose object was Christ. It was necessary this man should be usefully blinded, who took his darkness for light. It was necessary to take from him by a divine light what

deceived him, and afterwards make those scales **CHAP.**  
fall from his eyes, which concealed from him **XVIII.**  
salvation and truth. It was necessary to hum-  
ble a presumptuous person, who had his head  
filled with nothing but his own justice, and to  
whom his weakness and corruption were un-  
known. It was necessary to teach him, that  
all was grace and mercy; and that without the  
merits of Jesus Christ we have nothing in us  
profitable, or productive of salvation.

He represented the Jews in his first state;  
and was the figure of them too in the sec-  
ond. For he was of the tribe of Benjamin,  
the last of the sons of Jacob, so tenderly be-  
loved by Joseph; and who so well expresses  
the last Jews who will unite themselves to the  
faith of their forefathers, and will worship the  
true Joseph, after having delivered him to the  
Gentiles.

Thus St. Paul is the only apostle † who has  
discovered to us the secret of the conversion of  
the Jews in spite of their dispersion, and of  
their vocation to the faith which they have  
abandoned. He is likewise the only one who  
has admonished the Gentiles not to forget their  
origin, and not to assume the place of the an-  
cient olive-tree, of which they are not the root  
but the branches, tho' not the natural ones,  
having been engrafted by grace and against  
order on a foreign stock, wherein the Jews,  
who are the ancient branches, shall be again

† Rom. iv. 4, &c;

**PART** re-established \* notwithstanding their unworthiness and rage against Christ, like that of **III.** Saul, when the time of his mercy and of our ingratitude shall come.

Thus the conversion and apostleship of St. Paul are united with the whole plan of religion, for past and future times, in regard of Jews and Gentiles, of whom he is equally the consolation and glory, and whose interests are equally dear to him.

Methinks, when all these truths are equally present to the mind, one is touched with a new respect for this apostle, and with a fresh admiration of the order and connection of designs to which God made him subservient; and that one perceives much better the force and extent of the proof which is drawn from his conversion and apostleship in favour of the christian religion, of which it evidently unites all the parts and dependences.

\* Rom. iv. 31, 32.



*Miracles wrought by the apostles. Certainty of these miracles. They are a convincing proof of the principal mysteries of religion. Such a proof is within the reach of every one's capacity, and dispenses with all examination. Reasons of the order observed hitherto. Necessity of entering into the examination of many miracles wrought by the apostles. 1. The miraculous cure of a lame man from his birth, upwards of forty years old. 2. A paralytic person, who had been sick eight years, cured by a single word. Resurrection of Tabitha. 3. Efficacy of St. Peter's shadow. 4. The lie of Ananias and Sapphira punished by a sudden death. 5. Miraculous deliverance of St. Peter.*

## ARTICLE I.

*Reasons of the order observed hitherto. The necessity of entering into a particular examination of several miracles wrought by the apostles.*

**A**FTER what has been said, I fear not to assert, that the christian religion is fully demonstrated by the certainty of the essential facts on which it is founded: and I designedly proposed to myself the order I have followed, in order to attack infidelity in its trenches, and

**PART** to prepare reasonable minds for other proofs,  
**III.** which have the same degree of evidence and certainty as the preceding, but do not separately considered decide the whole, tho' they have a great relation thereto, and are even productive of this general effect as soon as they are united.

As such I look upon the miracles of the apostles related in the scriptures, some of which are necessarily connected with the whole system of religion, and others have an immediate object, more limited, but secretly united to all the rest. And I am persuaded, that we cannot examine them in particular without perceiving their certainty, and concluding from thence the certainty of the christian religion.

I say, examine them in particular, because a superficial view has not the same effect; and we daily find by experience, that persons who have doubts upon these heads are commonly indifferent and lazy; that we must bear them company in their enquiries to keep up their spirits; and that their reflections are slow and weak when we trust to their diligence, and do not communicate to their minds a kind of heat and life by assisting them in their reasonings.

Such a succour, more necessary than desired, obliges a person to enlarge so far his arguments, as frequently to disgust some men who love to complain of every thing that is short as insufficient, and of what is diffuse as tedious and excessive; and who always calling for proofs of religion, seek for pretexts to make no use of them. But there are men of a better character; and 'tis such as these we intend here to serve.

A R-

ARTICLE II.

*Miraculous cure of a man lame from his nativity, who was upwards of forty years old.*

**A**Mongst the miracles of the apostles, I stop first at that which is first related. † “Now when Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth † hour. And a certain man lame from his mother’s womb, was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple. Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked an alms. And Peter fastening his eyes upon him, with John, said, Look on us. And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them. Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have, give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand, and lift him up; and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. And he leaping up, stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God. And all the people saw him

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† Acts iii. 1, &c.

† Three in the afternoon.



PART. " him walking, and praising God : and they  
 III. " knew that it was he which sat at the Beautiful gate of the temple, and they were filled  
 " with wonder and amazement at that which  
 " had happened unto him. And as the lame  
 " man which was healed held Peter and John,  
 " all the people ran together unto them in the  
 " porch which is called Solomon's, greatly  
 " wondering. And when Peter saw it, he answered  
 " unto the people, Ye men of Israel,  
 " why marvel ye at this : or why look ye so  
 " earnestly on us, as though by our own power  
 " or holiness we had made this man to walk ?  
 " The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of  
 " Jacob, the God of our fathers hath glorified  
 " his Son Jesus, whom ye delivered up, and  
 " denied him in the presence of Pilate. . . .  
 " And killed the prince of life, whom God  
 " hath raised from the dead, whereof we are  
 " witnesses. And his name, through faith in his  
 " name, hath made this man strong, whom ye  
 " see and know : yea, the faith which is by  
 " him, hath given him this perfect soundness,  
 " in the presence of you all."

I omit the rest of the discourse : \* " And  
 " as they spake unto the people, the priests  
 " and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees  
 " came upon them. Being grieved that they taught  
 " the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection  
 " of the dead. And they laid hands on them, and put  
 " them in hold unto the next day : for it was now  
 " even-tide. . . . And it came to pass on the  
 " morrow,

\* Acts iv. 1, &c.

“ morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and CHAP.  
“ scribes, and Annas the high priest, and XIX.  
“ Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as  
“ many as were of the kindred of the high  
“ priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem.  
“ And when they had set them in the midst,  
“ they asked, By what power, or by what  
“ name have ye done this?

“ Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost,  
“ said unto them, Ye rulers of the people and  
“ elders of Israel: If we this day be examined  
“ of the good deed done to the impotent man,  
“ by what means he is made whole; be it  
“ known unto you all, and to all the people of  
“ Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of  
“ Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God rais-  
“ ed from the dead, even by him doth this man  
“ stand here before you whole. This is the  
“ stone which was set at nought by you  
“ builders, which is become the head of the  
“ corner. Neither is there salvation in any  
“ other: for there is none other name under  
“ heaven given among men, whereby we must  
“ be saved.

“ Now when they saw the boldness of Peter  
“ and John, and perceived that they were un-  
“ learned and ignorant men, they marvelled,  
“ and they took knowledge of them, that they  
“ had been with Jesus. And beholding the  
“ man which was healed standing with them,  
“ they could say nothing against it. But  
“ when they had commanded them to go  
“ aside out of the council, they conferred  
“ among themselves, saying, What shall we do  
“ unto

*A Treatise of the Principles*

PART "unto these men: for that indeed a notable  
HIX "miracle hath been done by them, is manifest  
"to all them that dwell in Jerusalem, and we  
"cannot deny it. But that it spread no further  
"among the people, let us straitly threaten  
"them, that they speak henceforth to no  
"man in this name. And they called them,  
"and commanded them not to speak at all,  
"nor teach in the name of Jesus.  
"But Peter and John answered and said unto  
"them, Whether it be right in the sight of God,  
"to hearken unto you more than unto God,  
"judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things  
"which we have seen and heard. So when  
"they had further threatened them, they let  
"them go, finding nothing how they might  
"punish them, because of the people; for all  
"men glorified God for that which was done.  
"For the man was above forty years old on  
"whom this miracle of healing was shewed.  
"And being let go, they went to their own  
"company, and reported all that the chief  
"priests and elders had said unto them. And  
"when they heard that they lift up their voice  
"to God with one accord, and said, Lord,  
"thou art God, which hast made heaven and  
"earth, and the sea, and all that in them is;  
"who by the mouth of thy servant David hast  
"said, Why did the heathen rage, and the  
"people imagine vain things? The kings of  
"the earth stood up, and the rulers were ga-  
"thered together, against the Lord and against  
"his Christ. For of a truth, against thy holy  
"child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed,  
"both



“ both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the CHAP. XIX.  
“ Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were ga-  
“ thered together, for to do whatsoever thy  
“ hand and thy counsel determined before  
“ to be done. And now, Lord, behold their  
“ threatenings; and grant unto thy servants,  
“ that with all boldness they may speak thy  
“ word, by stretching forth thy hand to  
“ heal: and that signs and wonders may be  
“ done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.  
“ And when they had prayed, the place was  
“ shaken where they were assembled together,  
“ and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost,  
“ and they spake the word of God with  
“ boldness.

It was impossible for me to abridge any part of this narrative, the whole being necessary: and had I suppressed any thing, I must have expressed it in other words, which could not have reached the noble simplicity of the scripture. It is with this inimitable simplicity that I am first struck: for unless men had been influenced by the Spirit of God, how could they, amidst such interesting circumstances, forbear all reflections, suppress all the praises due to the wisdom and courage of the apostles, say nothing against the voluntary obstinacy of their unjust judges, nor insult their vain hopes of stifling a public miracle, and the resurrection of Christ, of which it was a proof, by still vainer menaces?

I consider in the second place, that all the circumstances are so connected together, and so inseparable, that we cannot admit a part without

PART

III.

without being forced to allow the whole. That all which is said of the temple, of the council of the Jews, of the chief of the sacerdotal race, agrees exactly with the time, and that all the possible marks of truth are found in this narrative.

I consider in the third place, that this lame person was so from his birth, and that he was then forty years old: that he had been daily carried to the door of the temple, which was the most famous and most frequented, to receive alms: that he was well known by the inhabitants of Jerusalem: that the time when he was cured was that of public prayer and of the sacrifice of the paschal lamb, which was then offered as a holocaust by an express and inviolable order of the law: that the witnesses of the miracle were in great number, and assembled from different parts of the city: that the miracle was wrought in a moment, and that it was so perfect, that not only the lame man could walk, but that he jumped and leaped for joy, never weary of praising God, and shewing to the apostles his gratitude: that when he held them with his hands as his benefactors, all the multitude assembled round them in the gallery that bore the name of Solomon: that it was then St. Peter in a second discourse converted five thousand of his auditors, who with the three thousand whom another discourse had moved, composed as it were the basis and foundation of the church at Jerusalem; a church so rich in virtues, and so weaned from transitory things: that the priests, and in particular the Sadducees,

Sadducees, who were greater enemies than the CHAP. rest to the belief of the resurrection, by putting XIX. the lame man as well as the apostles in prison, added a new certainty to the miracle: and that the council by questioning the apostles in the presence of the lame man, and contenting themselves with simple menaces, compleated the evidence of the very truth which they would willingly have stifled.

In the third place, I consider some strokes in this history that bear the character of divinity, and infinitely superior to what human nature has in itself. "Look upon us, said St. Peter "to the lame person: silver and gold have I "none, but such as I have I give thee. In the "name of Jesus of Nazareth, rise up and "walk." What a nobleness of expression! what a command over nature! and at the same time what disinterestedness and faith! 'Tis not man that speaks, but the Holy Ghost: 'tis rather Christ who commands, than his servant.

The people being assembled, admire Peter and John, as if they had been the principal cause of the prodigy which they had wrought; but listen to these apostles, and you will be more astonished at their modesty than their faith. "Ye men of Israel, says he, why look "ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own "power or holiness, we had made this man to "walk? The God of our fathers hath glorified his Son Jesus, whom ye delivered up and "denied in the presence of Pilate, whom God "hath raised from the dead. And his name, "through



PART " through faith in his name, hath made this  
 III. " man strong."

These same men presented for the first time before the most august tribunal of the nation, but composed of persons who were enemies to Christ and his memory, who were full of anger and inveteracy against his disciples, answer with a firmness and wisdom, which according to the promise of Christ are inspired into them from on high, and not only raise them above this tribunal, but above the whole world. " If we this day, says he, be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole; be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole." Was there ever an answer more worthy of the majesty of God, whom they represented, and of the truth of the resurrection of Christ, of which they were witnesses?

Their judges having nothing to answer, employed prohibitions and menaces: and such menaces joined to authority and hatred have greater efficacy than words. But observe what these divine men oppose: " Whether it be right in the sight of God, to hearken unto you, more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." Is it possible in fewer words to confound injustice, without injuring

lawful

lawful authority ; to shew an intrepid courage, CHAP.  
without failing in respect ; to satisfy one's con- XIX.  
duct, without complaining of that of others ;  
to raise one's self beyond the reach of fear and  
temporal calamities, without opposing any thing  
but the fear of God, and the obedience due  
to him ?

They are dismissed, after several new efforts  
made to intimidate them ; and when they give  
an account to their brethren of the menaces of  
men, the whole assembly, instead of being  
frightened, fell to prayer, and asked of God,  
that he would encrease the strength and cou-  
rage of his servants, and stretch forth his  
hand to multiply the cure and miracle wrought  
in the name of his Son Jesus : all the resistance  
of men thus becoming vain against him, and  
the conspiracy of princes and hostile nations  
serving only to render his name more celebrated,  
as he himself had foretold by his prophets. Is  
there any thing even in the history of religion,  
that has a stronger character of the Spirit of  
God, and shews more faith, piety, persuasion,  
and preparation to suffer and sacrifice all for  
truth ?

Let us now join all these reflections, or ra-  
ther all the circumstances on which they are  
founded, and let us judge whether it be possible  
for us, making a good use of our reason, to look  
upon such a miracle as doubtful : and whether,  
if we acknowledge it has all possible proofs of  
truth, it be possible for us to hesitate still upon  
the essential points of christianity, of which they  
are an evident proof. For this miracle was  
wrought

PART wrought in the name of Jesus Christ crucified;  
 III. and raised again, foretold by the prophets, and  
 the only Saviour and Son of God.

I have a little enlarged on this first miracle, to spare myself long reflections on the others, because the consequences are the same : and to shew to those who seek sincerely for instruction, how easy and short the road is even by the history of the christian religion, one fact well understood, proving all the rest ; and abstract reasonings, of which a great many are incapable, being no longer necessary, when the principal mysteries of Christ are demonstrated by sensible proofs, within the reach of all capacities.

### ARTICLE III.

*The man sick of the palsy, for eight years, cured by a single word. Resurrection of Tabitha.*

**D**URING an interval of peace which the churches of Judea, Galilee, and Samaria enjoyed, \* “ It came to pass, as Peter “ passed throughout all quarters, he came “ down also to the saints which dwelt at “ Lydda : and there he found a certain man “ named Æneas, which had kept his bed eight “ years, and was sick of the palsy. And Peter “ said unto him, Æneas, Jesus Christ maketh “ thee whole : arise, and make thy bed. And “ he

\* Acts ix. 32.



“ he arose immediately. And all that dwelt at CHAP.

“ Lydda, and Saron, saw him, and turned to XIX.

“ the Lord.” The date of the distemper more  
antient than christianity: the instantaneous and  
perfect cure at the invocation of the name of  
Jesus: the notoriety of this miracle: the con-  
version of two cities which had a certain know-  
ledge of it, are circumstances, that are neither  
suspicious, nor natural; and the manner in  
which a fact of this consequence is reported,  
in short plain terms, adds still a new characte-  
ristic to truth. But here follows something  
more circumstantial and important.

“ Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple

“ named Tabitha, which by interpretation is

“ called Dorcas: this woman was full of good

“ works and alms-deeds which she did. And

“ it came to pass in those days that she was

“ sick, and died: whom when they had wash-

“ ed, they laid her in an upper chamber. And

“ forasmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppa, and

“ the disciples had heard that Peter was there,

“ they sent unto him two men, desiring him

“ that he would not delay to come to them.

“ Then Peter arose, and went with them.

“ When he was come, they brought him

“ into the upper chamber: and all the widows

“ stood by him weeping, and shewing the

“ coats and garments which Dorcas made while

“ she was with them. But Peter put them all

“ forth, and kneeled down, and prayed, and

“ turning to the body, said, Tabitha, arise.

“ And she opened her eyes: and when she saw

“ Peter,

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PART " Peter, she sat up. And he gave her his  
 III. " hand and lift her up : and when he had  
 { " called the saints and widows, presented her  
 " alive. And it was known throughout all  
 " Joppa, and many believed in the Lord."

What would we desire to render a miracle of this nature certain, which is not found in this ? St. Peter is absent, and in his absence Tabitha dies : they send to Lydda, where he is, two men to intreat him to come ; and during their journey and his, her death became more known and public. The disconsolate widows, who mourn for her, are witnesses above suspicion. St. Peter remains alone with the body, and after a prayer, he raises Tabitha again to life by one word. The widows, and the other disciples receive her from his hands in a perfect state of health. All the city of Joppa is informed of this miracle, and many of its inhabitants are converted. This is related by a contemporary writer, who was famous amongst the Christians, and author of one of the books of the gospel. Besides, this very writer had a strict intimacy with the apostles, and in particular with St. Paul, was perfectly informed of what he writes, and preserves in his narrative an unaffected and unparalleled modesty. To hold out against all this, a man must have laid down to himself as a rule to believe nothing ; and in regard to a person of that character, all manner of histories must be useless.

ARTICLE IV.

*Efficacy of the shadow of St. Peter.*

“ **A**ND \* by the hands of the apostles,  
“ says the same historian, were many  
“ signs and wonders wrought among the  
“ people. . . . : Inſomuch that they brought  
“ forth the ſick into the ſtreets, and laid them  
“ on beds and couches, that at the leaſt the  
“ ſhadow of Peter paſſing by might overſha-  
“ dow ſome of them.” This particular cir-  
cumſtance and ſhadow of St. Peter, and its effi-  
cacy in curing diſtempers, is ſo far from being  
natural, or likely to come into the mind of man,  
that nothing but the force of truth could have  
rendered it credible, and it muſt have been  
experience that gave the firſt notion of it. For  
the ſick at that time being expoſed in the ſtreets,  
where the apoſtles paſſed, that they might re-  
ceive from them a cure by their prayers, and  
by the interpoſition of their hands, or ſome  
other means, they found that the ſhadow of St.  
Peter had the ſame power : and this unlooked-  
for trial became afterwards the foundation of  
their faith and expectation. Thus probably  
they were both eſtabliſhed. But independently  
of this conjecture, the ſtranger the fact is, the  
leſs it ought to be ſuſpected : and the leſs natu-  
ral it is to invent it, the more reaſonable it is  
to believe it.

Z 2

ARTICLE

\* AAs v. 12, 15.



ARTICLE V.

*The lye of Ananias and Sapphira punished by death.*

WE have spoken elsewhere of the punishment of Ananias and Sapphira his wife, who agreed together to bring to the feet of the apostles a part of the price of a field which they had sold, pretending it was the full value: but I shall repeat here the manner in which the words of St. Peter deprived these unhappy persons of life, because the miracle on one side was very astonishing, and on the other so public, that it is impossible to call it in question. Ananias came the first, and St. Peter knowing the bottom of his heart, which he endeavoured to hide by a false appearance of disinterestedness and liberality: “Why, says he, “\* Ananias, hath Satan filled thine heart, to “lye to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back “part of the land? Whiles it remained, was “it not thine own? and after it was sold, was “it not in thine own power? why hast thou “conceived this thing in thy heart? thou hast “not lyed unto men, but unto God. And “Ananias hearing these words, fell down, and “gave up the ghost: and a great fear came “on all them that heard these things.—And “it was about the space of three hours after, “when his wife, not knowing what was done, “came

\* Acts v. 1, &c.

“came in. And Peter answered unto her, Tell CHAP.  
“me whether ye sold the land for so much. XIX.  
“And she said, Yea, for so much. Then  
“Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have  
“agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the  
“Lord? behold, the feet of them which have  
“buried thy husband are at the door, and shall  
“carry thee out. Then fell she down straight-  
“way at his feet, and yielded up the ghost.”

These two punishments reiterated, tho' within the space of three hours, performed also in public, and with a design of intimidating all those who might be capable of a like dissimulation, could not be unknown to the faithful of Jerusalem, or looked upon as indubitable, if they had seen nothing of this nature. Could they have been written by St. Luke during the lives of St. Peter and of the other apostles, that is, when every one knew the truth or falsity of them, had they not been certain and public? Is it even probable that they could have been imagined? Could the mildness of the new law, and the charity of the apostles, produce such a thought? Are we not surprized ourselves, when we read with what severity a fault which was the first, and unpreceded by any admonition, and which might have been expiated by shame and repentance, was twice punished by a sudden death, which left not, one would think, the least room for repentance? Should we have imagined that this fault was of such consequence, and deserved such a terrible indignation? And if we had

PART looked upon it as very criminal, would we  
 III. have made St. Peter say, that Ananias and Saphira were free to have sold or not their inheritance, and after it free to have retained the whole ; and that their crime consisted in this alone, viz. their dissimulation, which seemed as if it had been designed to try the penetration of the apostles, and the knowledge they had of secret things? There are in this history so many things that have so little conformity with the general ideas of men, but so worthy of the Spirit of God which conducted the apostles, that independently of its being so well known, we ought to be persuaded of its being certain and divine.

## ARTICLE VI.

### *The miraculous deliverance of St. Peter.*

THE miracle which set St. Peter at liberty when he was in prison, was not his own work ; but it has such a connection with the truth of the christian religion, of which Herod and the Jews were enemies and persecutors, and it is so impossible to deny it, that we ought to look upon it as a shining testimony which God gave to the truth of the gospel preached by St. Peter. The history is well known ; but I cannot make my reflections thereon, till I have related it in the very terms the Holy Ghost has made use of.

“ Now



“ Now † about that time Herod the king CHAP.  
“ stretched forth his hands to vex certain of XIX.  
“ the church. And he killed James the bro-  
“ ther of John with the sword.” ’Tis impos-  
sible to use fewer words, in describing a perse-  
cution of which the king himself was the prin-  
cipal author, and in relating the martyrdom of  
the first apostle that was put to death, and who  
was one of the three whom Christ had most  
favoured. An historian who gives so cursory  
an account of facts of such importance, cannot  
be suspected of exaggeration, or of seeking for  
a fabulous subject.

“ And because he saw it pleased the Jews,  
“ he proceeded further to take Peter also;  
“ (then were the days of unleavened bread.)  
“ And when he had apprehended him, he put  
“ him in prison, and delivered him to four  
“ quaternions of soldiers, to keep him, intend-  
“ ing after Easter to bring him forth to the  
“ people. Peter therefore was kept in prison;  
“ but prayer was made without ceasing of the  
“ church unto God for him. And when  
“ Herod would have brought him forth, the  
“ same night Peter was sleeping between two  
“ soldiers, bound with two chains; and the  
“ keepers before the door kept the prison. And  
“ behold the angel of the Lord came upon  
“ him, and a light shined in the prison: and  
“ he smote Peter on the side, and raised him  
“ up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains  
“ fell off from his hands. And the angel said

Z 4

“ unto

† Acts. xii. 1.

PART "unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals : and so he did. And he saith unto  
 III. "him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me." An admirable detail, to leave in the mind of the apostle a more lively impression of each circumstance, and thus imprint the memory of it ; to prove to him not only the providence of God in regard of his person, but in regard of all that was necessary for him ; and to shew with what care he rescued him from so many dangers, and how far he was master of those who held him in custody.

"And he went out and followed him, and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel : but thought he saw a vision. When they were past the first and second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city, which opened to them of its own accord : and they went out and passed on through one street, and forthwith the angel departed from him. And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews."

I wave taking notice of the plainness and simplicity of this narrative, so many times mentioned in regard of other places, and always worthy of admiration : but how is it possible for us, in hearing this history, to be insensible of the force of truth ? Is it thus that men invent and spread abroad false miracles ? Do we  
 not

not see that St. Peter himself has a difficulty to CHAP. XIX.  
believe the miracle real, so far was he from in-  
venting it; and instead of taking a dream for a  
reality, he took truth a considerable time for a  
dream. But let us finish.

“ And when he had considered the thing,  
“ he came to the house of Mary the mother  
“ of John, whose surname was Mark, where  
“ many were gathered together praying. And  
“ as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a  
“ damsel came to hearken, named Rhoda. And  
“ when she knew Peter’s voice, she opened  
“ not the gate for gladness, but ran in, and told  
“ how Peter stood before the gate. And they  
“ said unto her, Thou art mad. But she con-  
“ stantly affirmed that it was even so. Then  
“ said they, It is his angel. But Peter conti-  
“ nued knocking: and when they had opened  
“ the door, and saw him, they were astonish-  
“ ed. But he beckoning unto them with the  
“ hand to hold their peace, declared unto them  
“ how the Lord had brought him out of the  
“ prison. And he said, Go, and shew these  
“ things unto James, and to the brethren. And  
“ he departed, and went into another place.”

Here we fancy we see the very things,  
so naturally are they described. And we should  
have no taste for truth, if we did not perceive  
it in the joyful transport of Rhoda, in the little  
probability that those to whom she hastens to  
impart it find in her narrative, but principally  
in the manner in which the apostle gives an  
account of his delivery, by ordering the per-  
sons



PART sons present to acquaint St. James and the brethren, and retiring prudently, not to expose himself to the danger out of which God had drawn him by a miracle.

“ Now as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers, what was become of Peter. And when Herod had sought for him, and found him not, he examined the keepers, and commanded that they should be put to death.” He was afterwards struck himself by the hand of an angel, whilst he was speaking from his throne to the Tyrians, and suffered them in their acclamations to say that his discourse was that of a god and not of man.

This is the fact in its full extent; from which we can subtract no part without injury to the rest, which we must absolutely receive or reject. Let us then consider, whether we will resolve to deny that Herod ever persecuted the church, that he put St. James to death, that he imprisoned St. Peter in order to exhibit to the people a public spectacle of his punishment after the feast of the passover, that he put his soldiers to torture who were his guards, that not being able to discover any thing by that means, he condemned them to death, that a little time after he was invisibly struck when he was in perfect health, and when his pride was most gratified, as Josephus † observes, tho’ he knew not the hand that gave him the mortal blow. For my part, I content

† Joseph. Antiquit. l. 19. c. 8.

I content myself with the history of St. Peter's imprisonment; for he could not escape from Herod and from the hatred of the Jews but by a miracle: and I believe all the rest, if his imprisonment be certain.

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CHAP. XX.

*Continuation of the same subject. 6. St. Paul strikes with blindness the magician Barjesus. 7. The same apostle works so public and evident a miracle, that the inhabitants of Lystra take him for a god, and want to offer up sacrifices to him. 8. He raises publicly to life a young man, that was bruised to death by a fall from a third story. Convincing proofs, that the miracles wrought by the apostles cannot be attributed to magic. The devil condemned to silence, tho' he affected to bear testimony of St. Paul and the gospel.*

ARTICLE I.

*St. Paul strikes with blindness the magician Barjesus.*

AFTER St. Peter was set at liberty, the scripture speaks very little of him; but it then begins the history of the particular actions of Saint Paul, some of which have the two characters I require, of being miraculous

PART raculous and public, and so connected with  
 III. other events, that we cannot without an unjust  
 obstinacy refuse to believe them, nor believe  
 them without sincerely respecting the christian  
 religion, of which they are a clear proof.

\* “ And when they had gone through the  
 “ isle unto Paphos, they found a certain for-  
 “ cerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name  
 “ was Barjesus: which was with the deputy  
 “ of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent  
 “ man, who called for Barnabas and Saul, and  
 “ desired to hear the word of God. But Ely-  
 “ mas the forcerer (for so is his name by inter-  
 “ pretation) withstood them, seeking to turn  
 “ away the deputy from the faith. Then Saul  
 “ (who was also called Paul) filled with the  
 “ Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him and said,  
 “ O full of all subtilty and mischief, thou  
 “ child of the devil, thou enemy of all righte-  
 “ ousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the  
 “ right ways of the Lord? And now, behold,  
 “ the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou  
 “ shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a sea-  
 “ son. And immediately there fell on him a  
 “ mist and a darkness: and he went about,  
 “ seeking some to lead him by the hand. Then  
 “ the deputy, when he saw what was done,  
 “ believed, being astonished at the doctrine of  
 “ the Lord.”

It was with great reason that he was asto-  
 nished at this doctrine, for it was it that tri-  
 umphed in this Jew, who was a false prophet  
 and

\* Acts xiii. 6.



and magician, over the incredulity of the sy-  
nagogue, the seduction of false prophets, and  
all the delusive miracles of Satan. It triumphed  
thus after having precisely marked out in this  
impostor all the qualities it detests, and of which  
it was then going to take vengeance; it triumph-  
ed with such absolute power, and such confi-  
dence in the assistance of God, that it was  
impossible to mistake the true religion, which  
thus confounded error, and rendered its dark-  
ness sensible, by the punishment of external  
blindness.

What wit, what subtlety can wrest from  
christianity these advantages? Was the pro-  
consul Paul an obscure man, of whom they  
might spread abroad a false history with-  
out a refutation? Was it an indifferent thing to  
say of a Roman magistrate, that he was become  
a christian, if the fact was a mere fiction? Could  
Elymas, a man famous for his false predictions  
and forcery, a man known by the consul, and  
living in his house, be struck blind, without  
his punishment being public and notorious?  
And would this magician, who was in such  
high credit, have suffered himself to be dis-  
honoured by a false miracle? It must have been  
very evident, and manifestly the effect of the  
divine power, to determine the proconsul Paul  
to become a christian; and the conversion of  
the proconsul must have been notorious, to  
induce the apostle to quit his ancient name of  
Saul, in order to take that of his disciple, of  
whom he had made such a glorious conquest.  
For we cannot attribute to any other cause such  
a change,

PART a change, which in other respects appears very  
 III. mysterious: Saul being a jewish name, and  
 the same with that of a king, who was repro-  
 bated for his disobedience and pride; and Paul  
 being a Roman name, signifying littleness or  
 infancy, which is inseparable from docility and  
 humility: as if St. Paul had a mind on this  
 occasion to declare himself openly for the Gen-  
 tiles, who were become docil and humble;  
 and thus to prefer them to the Jews, whose  
 ingratitude and reprobation had been figured by  
 that of Saul.

## ARTICLE II.

*The same apostle works so public and  
 glorious a miracle, that the inhabi-  
 tants of Lystra take him for a god;  
 and want to offer up sacrifices to  
 him.*

THE same apostle being come, together  
 with St. Barnabas, to Lystra, a city of  
 Lycaonia in the Lesser Asia: † “ There sat  
 “ a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his  
 “ feet, being a cripple from his mother’s  
 “ womb, who never had walked. The same  
 “ heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding  
 “ him, and perceiving that he had faith to be  
 “ healed, said with a loud voice, Stand up-  
 “ right

† Acts xiv. 8.

“ right on thy feet. And he leaped and CHAP.

“ walked. And when the people saw what XX.

“ Paul had done, they lift up their voices,

“ saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods

“ are come down to us in the likeness of

“ men. And they called Barnabas, Jupiter ;

“ and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the

“ chief speaker. Then the priest of Jupiter,

“ which was before their city, brought oxen

“ and garlands unto the gates, and would

“ have done sacrifice with the people.

“ Which when the apostles, Barnabas and

“ Paul, heard of, they rent their cloaths, and

“ ran in among the people, crying out, and

“ saying, Sirs, why do ye these things ? We

“ also are men of like passions with you, and

“ preach unto you, that ye should turn from

“ these vanities unto the living God, which

“ made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and

“ all things that are therein. . . . . And with

“ these sayings scarce restrained they the

“ people, that they had not done sacrifice

“ unto them.

“ And there came thither certain Jews from

“ Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the

“ people, and having stoned Paul, drew him

“ out of the city, supposing he had been dead.

“ Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about

“ him, he rose up, and came into the city :

“ and the next day he departed with Barnabas

“ to Derbe.”

Nothing is more worthy of the attention of  
a prudent man, and who seeks sincerely after



PART truth, than such a history : and as I suppose  
III. my reader in this disposition, I desire he will  
please to examine it with me. I shall begin  
at the end, and ask him, whether after excessive and divine honours, one would ever have expected that St. Paul should be stoned and dragged for dead out of the city, by the same people who wanted to worship him ? Whether the historian could have passed so quickly from one extreme to the other, had he not been conducted by truth, tho' remote, as it here seems, from probability ? Whether he would have related in so few words the martyrdom of St. Paul, and his perfect and quick recovery, had he intended to write false miracles ? Whether he would not have made another use of the fiction that Paul and Barnabas had been taken for gods, one for Mercury and the other for Jupiter, and had victims with chaplets brought to their door, if it had been really a fiction ?

I proceed after these reflections to the discourse of the apostles. Can any thing be more wonderful than the excessive concern, which they demonstrate by rending their cloaths because they are looked on as divinities ? than the care and zeal they shew, in declaring that they are but men, subject to the same infirmities with those who wanted to worship them : and than the courage with which they treat the public worship and the gods to whom it was payed, and even Jupiter himself, as empty superstitions, though Jupiter's priest was present,  
together

together with the victims destined for him, and CHAP.  
all the people? What a nobleness of mind is there XX.  
in all this? what grandeur, what zeal for truth,   
what an elevation above all human passions?  
and with what respect ought we to listen to  
men so disinterested, so sincere, so prepared to  
die, and to be sacrificed and stoned for truth, by  
a whole people, who can scarce be restrained  
from offering religious sacrifices to them?

At last I come to the miracle wrought in the  
person of the man who had been lame from his  
mother's womb: he had never walked; and a  
collusion with the apostles was impossible. His  
cure is performed in public, at the end of one  
of St. Paul's sermons, whose doctrine is  
thereby confirmed: it is perfected in an in-  
stant, and costs but one word; the people with  
reason attribute it to divine power, and they are  
deceived only by taking for divinities those who  
were the ministers of the true and living God.  
How can such facts be rendered doubtful? by  
whom should they have been written to merit  
credit, if the companion of Paul be not a  
sufficient authority? or in what manner should  
they have been written, if the dignity, simpli-  
city, and even brevity of the scriptures which  
relate them, does not make a sufficient impres-  
sion on us to deserve our belief?

## ARTICLE III.

*He raises publicly a young man to life,  
who was bruised to death by a fall  
from a third story.*

THERE is only one miracle more that I think proper to make use of, because it is such as cannot be contested, and besides, it is written by an ocular witness. “ And \* we  
“ failed away from Philippi †, says St,  
“ Luke, and came with them to Troas ‡  
“ in five days, where we abode seven days.  
“ And upon the first day of the week, when  
“ the disciples came together to break bread,  
“ Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on  
“ the morrow, and continued his speech until  
“ midnight. And there were many lights in  
“ the upper chamber where they were gathered  
“ together. And there sat in a window a certain  
“ young man, named Eutychus, being fallen in  
“ a deep sleep : and as Paul was preaching, he  
“ sunk down with sleep, and fell down from  
“ the third loft, and was taken up dead. And  
“ Paul went down, and fell on him, and em-  
“ bracing him, said, Trouble not yourselves ;  
“ for his life is in him. When he therefore  
“ was come up again, and had broken bread  
“ and eaten, and talked a long while, even till  
“ break

\* Acts xx. 6.

† A town of Macedonia.

‡ A town of Phrygia.



" break of day, so he departed. And they CHAP.  
" brought the young man alive, and were not XX.  
" a little comforted."

Nothing can be more remote from all affectation than this narrative. The miracle is mentioned only as an incident. It is related merely as an interruption in the discourse of St. Paul, and in the liturgy which he celebrated with the faithful of Troas; and immediately the historian returns to the instruction and ministry of St. Paul, as to his principal object.

And yet no less a miracle is operated than the resurrection of a dead person, who had been bruised with a high fall, occasioned by a deep sleep, which renders the accident still more fatal, by depriving him who fell of all precaution and power of saving himself. This resurrection, which interrupts the liturgy only for a few moments, is so clear and perfect, that the young man is capable of appearing some hours after before the whole congregation, who perceive no marks of his fall, and are thereby greatly comforted. Yet the historian dwells so little on this miracle, that he scarce uses the words necessary to relate it. Who can therefore be so wretchedly incredulous, as to suspect any artifice here? who but St. Luke would have resolved to relate so succinctly and in so few words such a prodigy? and how accustomed must he have been to the like wonders, to seem so little affected with it?

I shall finish this subject with an observation, that appears to me very reasonable, which

PART. is, that all the miracles I have spoken of (and  
 III. the same may be said of those which I have  
 omitted) are so serious, and worthy of  
 God, so agreeable to the place, persons, and  
 truths of the gospel which they were intended  
 to prove, and are written in so prudent and mo-  
 dest a stile, that we immediately perceive the  
 difference between them and those false mi-  
 racles with which idle and rash men have some-  
 times filled some of the acts of the martyrs,  
 whose primitive simplicity they altered.

#### A R T I C L E IV.

*Convincing proofs that the miracles  
 wrought by the apostles could not be  
 attributed to magic.*

I Am ashamed after this to offer a serious  
 answer to those, who should be tempted to  
 attribute the miracles which the apostles  
 wrought by the power of God, to magic and  
 the co-operation of the devil. Simon the ma-  
 gician shall answer them for me, he who was  
 better informed than any other, of the infinite  
 distance there was betwixt his tricks and the  
 real miracles of Philip, before whom he abjured  
 his magic, or those of St. Peter and St. John,  
 whose power he wanted to purchase. Elymas  
 likewise, or Barjesus, a famous magician, struck  
 with blindness by St. Paul, and treated by him  
 as

as a child of the devil, may undeceive those CHAP.  
who through excess of iniquity would attempt XX.  
to obscure the works of God, by attributing   
them to the spirit of darkness.

The gospel, by attacking idolatry and the impious worship of devils, has declared an irreconcilable war with all superstition, falsehood, illusion, and satanical oppression. One of the most essential conditions of baptism is to renounce this seducing spirit and all his works. The first fruit of the doctrine of Christ was to abolish all divinations, all oracles feigned or inspired by an infernal vapour, all inquiries into futurity, and books which taught those vain and detestable sciences, with which the devil had infected the universe. They burnt in the single city of Ephesus, in the presence of every one, books to a considerable value, \* which treated of divinations and magic, after St. Paul had preached the gospel. And this apostle, by silencing for ever the devil, who thought to gain his favour by speaking well of him, and praising the doctrine which he preached, has imposed eternal silence on those who should dare to suspect him of any intelligence with the spirit of lies, from whose mouth he would not receive the testimony which he affected to give of the truth.

\* To the value of fifty thousand pieces of silver, that is, about nineteen thousand livres, French money. Acts xix. 19.



ARTICLE V.

*The devil condemned to silence, tho' he  
affected to bear witness of St. Paul,  
and his gospel.*

THE history is thus given us in scripture: † “ And it came to pass (’tis St. Luke that speaks, who was present) as we went to prayer, a certain damsel, possessed with a spirit of divination, met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying. The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation. And this she did many days. But Paul being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour. And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew them into the market-place unto the rulers. And brought them unto the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city. And teach customs which are not lawful for us to observe, being Romans. And the magistrates rent off their cloaths, and commanded to beat them. “ And

† Acts xvi. 16.

“ And when they had laid many stripes upon  
“ them, they cast them into prison, charging XX.  
“ the jailer to keep them safely.”

CHAP. XX.

This is the fact with all its circumstances. We must now chuse, either to deny that this servant maid was possessed with a spirit of divination; or agree that this possession and divination were real. If we take the first, we shall have against us the notoriety of the fact, and the resentment of her masters against St. Paul, who had put an end to their gain by casting out the spirit: and we cannot contest a fact so strongly authoris'd, otherwise than by the general prejudice against all that is said of magic and the devil, as if there was nothing serious and real in the examples related upon this subject. But then we confirm the truth of the miracles of the apostles, by stripping magic of all its efficacy and virtue; instead of attributing to it the cure of diseases and of the natural defects of the body, and much less the resurrection of dead persons.

If we declare ourselves for the second part, by acknowledging in the girl delivered by St. Paul from possession, a real operation of the devil, we must confess that the Spirit of Christ acting in the apostles, is at such variance with the spirit of the devil, and of all that he affects extraordinary and marvellous to delude mankind, and to induce them to consult him, that he could not bear his approbation, but punished him by silence.

*The End of the SECOND VOLUME.*

And when they had laid many things upon Christ  
 "they say call them into prison, changing X  
 "the father to keep them safely."

This is the fact with all its circumstances.  
 We must now choose, either to deny that this  
 servant mind was possessed with a spirit of  
 divination; or agree that this possession and  
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 we shall have against us the testimony of  
 the fact, and the testimony of her masters  
 against St. Paul, who had put an end to their  
 gain by calling out the spirit; and we cannot  
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 punished him by silence.

The End of the Second Volume.